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FAMOUS
MONSTERS
#283
JANUARY 2015

FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND

Exclusives:
MARTIN LANDAU
revisits

SPACE: 1999

SAM J. JONES
& ALEX ROSS
celebrate cult fave
FLASH GORDON

X-FILES PREVIEW
Chris Carter on
MULDER & SCULLY'S
RETURN

STAR WARS THE FORCE AWAKENS

Featuring
MARK HAMILL'S
Official FM Interview

Plus:
KRAMPUS,
THE SHINING,
WALKING DEAD,
and much more
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OPENING WOUNDS

In May of 1977, I walked into a movie theater at the impressionable age of nine and walked out a different person. I was transformed. STAR WARS not only entertained me, it BLEW MY MIND. I wanted to tell stories. I wanted to make my own movies. I wanted to make people feel as exhilarated as I felt. And I was not alone. As a result of seeing STAR WARS, more dreamers headed to Hollywood on buses to turn their visions into reality than ever before, myself included, all because of George Lucas' unique vision. Now, after a three-decade wait, the sequel to RETURN OF THE JEDI has arrived with J.J. Abrams and Kathleen Kennedy co-producing the Empire that Lucas built. Beside the Morning Kid Mark Hamill, is sharing his FORCE AWAKENS perspective and special FM memories with us in this issue — and I get a dream opportunity to put STAR WARS all over the magazine I loved growing up.

But it's not all STAR WARS and THE FORCE AWAKENS. This is a Sci-Fi themed issue: FLASH GORDON (issue 35 this month), and SPACE. 1999 has turned 40. I had the privilege of looking back at these iconic space operas from the viewpoint of their respective leading men, Sam J. Jones and Martin London, in our new Retrospect series. Surprisingly, in this issue we also get to exclusively reveal cover art from the now LOST IN SPACE comic book from American Gothic Press. THE X-FILES is also back on TV by fan demand after a 13-year hiatus, and creator Chris Carter fills in the gaps for us.

Plus, there's plenty of holiday fun within these pages for the Monster Kids. Director Michael Dougherty talks seasonal stories and introduces KRAMPUS, the anti-Santa. Greg Nicotero takes us inside THE WALKING DEAD Season 6, and in honor of THE SHINING's 35th anniversary, I chatted up Lisa and Louise Burns — aka the Goody Twins — to get their memories of working with Stanley Kubrick on one of the most frightening movies of all time.

Lastly, I wouldn't be here making this magazine if it wasn't for Ed Blair. As Executive Editor, Ed gave me my first opportunity to write for FM back in 2012 when I met him waiting in line to see THE HOBBIT. Ed has shepherded this fine magazine over an incredible 39 issues with wit, wisdom, creativity, and fan appreciation. Above all else, he has remained true to the spirit of honorary Editor-in-Chief Forrest J Ackerman. Now, as Editor Emeritus, Ed will put his stamp on other projects within the ever-expanding FM umbrella while still contributing to our magazine.

May the Force Be With You, Ed.

David Weiner
Executive Editor
@TikAmbassador

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Forrest J. Ackerman

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ONE DOOR CLOSES (SUPERNATURALLY). ANOTHER OPENS UP...



personal issue, the Enchiladas and Monsters issue. And on that note, my humblest gratitude to all of you who made this such a memorable and fun/samurai/cool ride. Paas for the memories!

Ed Dier

Ed Dier

Editor Emeritus-Famous Monsters of Filmland

FAMOUS MONSTER KID: GREG NICOTERO

Monster Kid

(mān-stər-kid) adj., n.

1. A monster fan stemming from the horror flick boom of the late '50s & '60s
2. A collector of monster toys, kits, goodies, and memorabilia
3. A longtime fan of Famous Monsters of Filmland magazine



"Woo-hoo! Famous Monsters interview!"

And with that enthusiastic proclamation, Greg Nicotero's first solo FM interview was under way.

Like so many of today's great makeup FX maestros, THE WALKING DEAD triple threat (director/producer/zombie maker) Greg Nicotero's childhood was filled with a few of our favorite elements. He remembers, "I walked into Ede's in Pittsburgh—it's still there, by the way—and that's where I saw my first *Famous Monsters*. It was issue 96, with the werewolf and Mr. Hyde split cover on it. I was hooked! I remember going back to the store and buying every other FM they had!" But it didn't stop there. "My uncle, Sam Nicotero—he's an actor who was in THE CRAZIES—when he packed up and decided to head west, he gave me his entire collection of FMs. It was issues 1 through 64."

But while reading FM is one of the

finest gateways to greatness, by itself it's not enough to bridge the divide that allows one to level-up to the legendary status Nicotero has achieved. He also began his artistic endeavors with one of the all-time classic pastimes of the Monster Kid: "Aurora models," he remembers fondly. "I spent hours making Aurora models. Those and FM were my big connection to monsters."

Of course, for all Monster Kids, the true parade was meeting Uncle Forry. "I met Forry. Twice, actually. At a convention. But I never did get to tour his house. When I came to L.A. I was working a lot. In fact, I was offered a job my first week at Stan Winston's. But I did try to go see him. We went to the house but, for whatever reason, the guy who had

arranged it had made a mistake and Forry wasn't even there. So I never did see it. I wish I had. But I did get to meet him, and that was great."

**MORE GREG NICOTERO
AND WALKING DEAD ON
PAGE 38**





MONSTER MAIL CALL

Be part of the Monster Kid community! Share your thoughts about the new and/or vintage Famous Monsters, as well as your fondly held monster memories, for

FANGMAIL@FAMOUSMONSTERS.COM
(on Facebook or Twitter use #FangMail)

You may find yourself in our next issue!

THIS ISSUE DEDICATED TO



RON WHITE

The late, longtime Famous Monsters fan and friend of Forry left us too soon. His Monster Kid enthusiasm will always inspire us.

little brother, Big Friend and Little Friend. Sadly, it is no longer with us but to this day, the BF and I still love Halloween and still collect all things monsters. We owe it to the great Forry and his fantastic staff for creating this continued love of that genre. Thanks too, for bringing back at least one picture page dedicated to Mr. Monster, the great Chaney. Keep it up and my thanks again to you the staff at FM for continuing a wonderful tradition.

Tim Matchette
Rohnert Park, CA

adult who loved classic monsters just as much as I did! Because of Forry, I started my own collection. Because of those great covers, I began drawing and painting classic monsters. And because I love gothic horror and black and white movies, I started working on my photography and doing Gothic and classic horror themed photo shoots. And I can honestly say, my life would be totally different if I hadn't picked up that issue.

Malcolm Gittins
Pittsburg, PA

day if it wasn't for those monsters and that magazine, *STAR WARS* might mean a little less to me today.

Jason Ward
Long Beach, CA



BOBBY KELLER



JASON WARD



MALCOLM GITTINS

STAR WARS KID

As a kid, our cable went out just as *Star Wars* was airing 1977's *STAR WARS*. My dad adjusted cables and snatched the TV but it was still scrambled no matter what. All of a sudden the screen unscrewed just as Luke Skywalker entered the Cantina and I was hooked. A few weeks later at a garage sale I picked up *Famous Monsters STAR WARS Spectacular* and took it to school with me every

TRANSFORMED FAN

I'm loving the new issue (#282) and think it's just wonderful. *Famous Monsters* has been a part of my life since I picked up #99 way back in July of 1973. When I saw that beautiful cover of the Wolf Man, I just couldn't resist. Reading about classic monsters and finding out about Forry just seemed right. To me, he is and was a role model. Here was this

BEST FIENDS

Warty, many thanks to the staff at FM for bringing back some of the best features of that bygone and when Forest I ran the ship. Where I grew up in So. California, we used to start planning our Halloweens four months in advance. That was to my buddies and me the greatest day in the whole kid year. When we first discovered FM in the early 60's, it fueled our absolute love of everything monsters. We joined the FM club and through my best friend who kept all the FM issues, I was able to find the issue where my name appeared as a new member. Luckily, I found the issue and purchased it. I nicknamed my best friend and his

LIFE CHANGER

Famous Monsters of FilmLand is more than a magazine, it's a life changer. When I was growing up I was always into horror comics and such. However, when I first got introduced to FM, my whole world changed. The old covers by Basil Gogos, Forry's Ackermanston photos, and all of the amazing photos/articles inside just captivated me in such unexplainable ways. FM showed me that there were others like me and I wasn't alone. I blame FM for making me the Horror-Obsessed fiend that I have become today. So, Thank You *Famous Monsters*!

Bobby Keller
Orlando, FL

FM PICKS



MOVIES and TV

FLASH GORDON MONDO STEELBOOK



FLASH is back on Blu-ray in a slick new collector's format. What better way to watch the colorful adventures of Flash Gordon, Dale Arden, and Dr. Hans Zarkov on Mongo as they battle Ming the Merciless than on the 35th anniversary of its release? Mondo's #006 SteelBook features fan favorite Martin Aspin's compelling artwork (first released as a Mondo Gallery show poster) both outside and inside. The Mondo FLASH GORDON SteelBook is a Target exclusive. mondotees.com/target.com

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Time to give and receive...and buy some nice things for yourself with that gift card your unimaginative family member handed to you without any holiday wrapping. Here are a few of our favorite things that we think you'll like too.

PLASTIC GALAXY: THE STORY OF STAR WARS TOYS



STAR WARS fans of a certain age, along with Kenner collectors, will really connect with this wonderful documentary that delves into the story behind the toys we know and love. Detailing what went on behind the scenes during that watershed moment in 1977 when an unknown space movie changed the face of movie merchandising forever, PLASTIC GALAXY features interviews with former Kenner designers, authors, experts, collectors, and everyday fans like us. plasticgalaxymovie.com

LOST IN SPACE: THE COMPLETE SERIES



Danger, Will Robinson! Irwin Allen's beloved '60s space series is back as a massive 18-disc Blu-ray set containing 83 remastered episodes. Following the adventures of the Robinson family from planet to planet, the set extras include new commentaries, 50th anniversary interviews with the cast, hours of incredible archive footage, and a (mostly) original-cast performance of Bill Murr's unreproduced 1980 epilogue script. The set also contains character cards, a Robot B-9 blueprint, and a replica of Murr's first LOST screenplay — a great gift and perfect way to get ready for the upcoming LOST IN SPACE comic by American Gothic Press! foxconnect.com





GHOST STORY

This memorable 1981 film based on the chilling Peter Straub novel finally arrives on Blu-ray! Hollywood screen legends Fred Astaire, Melvyn Douglas, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., and John Houseman play four lifelong friends who convene each week to tell tales of terror. They also harbor a terrifying secret, which has come back for retribution. Special features include new commentary by director John Irvin and new interviews with author Peter Straub, actress Alice Krige, screenwriter Lawrence D. Cohen, producer Burt Weissbourd, and matte photographer Bill Taylor.

shoutfactory.com



THE CAR

Get out of the way! The '70s cult thrill ride finally smashes onto Blu-ray! All you need is an assembly of genre stars (James Brolin, Renny Cox, Kathleen Lloyd, John Marley, Melody Thomas Scott, Kyle Richards, Geraldine Keams, Kim Richards) a custom car from hell, literally — and a healthy dose of suspension of disbelief — and **THE CAR** will floor you with shameless, violent fun. Extras include brand-new interviews with director Elliot Silverstein, Keams, and Scott, TV and Radio spots; and more.

Out Dec. 13 shoutfactory.com

X-FILES COMPLETE SERIES COLLECTOR'S BOX SET

The X-FILES is back! Are you ready? Got 150 hours to spare? Gorge yourself on all nine seasons of the show that introduced the world to Mulder and Scully and made you "want to believe" in alien life, the paranormal, and a conspiracy theory around every corner. Special features include loads of deleted and extended scenes, international clips, filmmaker commentary, behind-the-scenes documentaries about production and the show's mythology, and much more.

Out Dec. 8 foxconnect.com



COWBOY BEBOP

Often considered the gateway drug of the anime world, this series about a group of intergalactic bounty hunters led by Spike Spiegel (imagine Han Solo crashed with Bruce Lee) traversing space in search of criminals has likely converted more people to Japanese cartoons than any other show in history because of its accessibility and charm.

Running only 24 episodes and one movie, the story blends action, humor, smarts, and tragedy in such effective ways that it has only grown in popularity since its release 17 years ago. Pick up the remastered Blu-ray of the series and enjoy one of the best space adventures of all time. A must have for any fans of **FIREFOX/SERENITY** or Han Solo.

funimation.com



BOOKS



CASINO ROYALE

The Birth of Cool: Now that you've gotten your SPECTRE fix, go back to the beginning of Bond with the Ian Fleming spy story that started it all. Folio Society, renowned for their beautifully crafted editions, have reinvented CASINO ROYALE with seven original illustrations and a pictorial slipcase by acclaimed illustrator Fay Dalton, plus an introduction by Booker Prize-winning author John Banville. It's the first title in Folio's new 007 collectors' series. foliosociety.com



THE COMPLETE X-FILES

January finds the amazing return of THE X-FILES to television, as you binge-watch the series to refresh your memory, reach for this comprehensive hardcover book to get the full story behind all nine seasons and the two movies. The only "authorized debriefing" on the show and the myths surrounding its storylines, the tome is packed with behind-the-scenes photos, telling interviews with cast and crew, and much more. insighteditions.com



THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF DON POST STUDIOS: DELUXE EDITION

The definitive story of the ultimate Halloween mask maker returns with a brand-new deluxe edition featuring 100 new pages of new content. Packed with plenty of photos of your love masks, behind-the-scenes production shots, fun product ads, and lots of Uncle Furry photos, the Don Post Studios story is a must for every Monster Kid. (Also available in a limited Special Collector Slipcase edition with hand-painted Glenn Strange Frankenstein's Monster latex slipcase sculpted by Creature Revenge Studios' Greg Duffy.) blackaprowinc.com



A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away...



STAR WARS LITTLE GOLDEN BOOKS

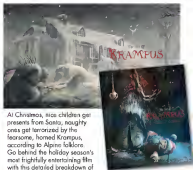
The Little Golden Book from our childhoods is back in a big way. Now, they've tackled George Lucas's epic space saga (both the original and prequel trilogies) in the format fans of all ages have grown to love. Packed with fun, retro illustrations, and straightforward storytelling, the new STAR WARS Little Golden Books are the perfect way to bring your little one up to speed on the adventures of Luke and Leia, their imperfect pop Anakin, and the battles that lead up to THE FORCE AWAKENS. randomhousekids.com/disney

STAR TREK: COSTUMES

Kirk's green casual wrap-around tunic. Picard's spandex one-piece jumpsuit. It's simply impossible to imagine STAR TREK without its iconic uniforms and alien wear. STAR TREK: COSTUMES - FIVE DECADES OF FASHION FROM THE FINAL FRONTIER breaks down the myriad creative and innovative Starfleet looks by original series costume designer William Ware Theiss and his series successors with exclusive new photos, concept art, and insightful commentary. J.J. Abrams, LeVar Burton, Jonathan Frakes and Ronald D. Moore add insight to the colorful portfolio, bound in a solid 256-page hardcover book. insighteditions.com



THE ART OF KRAMPUS



At Christmas, nice children get presents from Santa; naughty ones get terrorized by the fearsome, horned Krampus, according to Alpine folklore. Go behind the holiday season's most frightfully entertaining film with this detailed breakdown of writer-director Michael Dougherty's yuletide treat, with concept art, great photos, and revealing commentary from cast and crew. insighteditions.com

VIDEO GAMES

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

Disney was founded on the idea that dreams really do come true. Never has this been more apparent than when they licensed STAR WARS video games to EA. **BATTLEFRONT** is everything a SW fan has ever dreamed of: A first-person shooter that puts you in the heart of the saga's most iconic moments, fighting alongside the greatest heroes and villains. Fly a snowspeeder with friends while taking down AT-ATs. Join a squad of X-Wings. Team up for a ground assault on Tatooine. With snipery loadouts that rival *CALL OF DUTY* contemporaries, the game puts the emphasis on the missions and the playing and less on the prep. And aside from John Williams' score throughout and the meticulous attention to detail, the best part is split-screen co-op missions. The long-forgotten phenomenon of playing with a friend on the same screen in the same room is back, adding yet another level of emotion and intensity to an already brilliant nostalgia trip.

starwars.ea.com/starwars/battlefront



QUEEN: THE STUDIO COLLECTION

Flash! Ah-ahhh! Savior of the Universe! Freddie Mercury's stunning vocals combined with Brian May's searing guitar licks drove Queen's soundtrack to the 1980 movie classic to rock the world charts. Now, the original **FLASH GORDON** soundtrack (complete with dialogue and sound effects) is part of a larger vinyl collection for the ultimate Queen fan. The digitally remastered 18 LP box set contains **FLASH** as a fully yellow vinyl disc among all 15 of the band's studio albums, each one colored to reflect the album's theme. The impressive set also features a 108-page hardcover book containing album info, rare photos, and cool memorabilia from the iconic band, rounded out by John Deacon on bass and Roger Taylor on drums/vocals.

studiocollection.queenonline.com



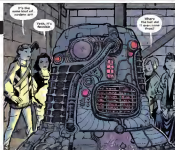
COMICS

PAPER GIRLS

SAGA writer Brian K. Vaughan reunites with **WONDER WOMAN** artist CHI CHANG to take us on a **STAND BY ME**-meets-**TWILIGHT** ZONE coming-of-age story set in the late '80s.

They say Halloween night is full of tricks, but for four 12-year-old paper route girls in Cleveland, Ohio, it's the morning after that holds the real surprises. The girls must watch each other's backs as they fend off strange men and uncover out-of-this-world mysteries they don't yet understand.

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FERRY'S ACK!-IVES

FM founding father Farry Ackenmtan was proud of his collection of more than 125,000 individual movie stills and posters dampled from the studios over the years. Each issue we pick favorites and also include the respective FM cover if they were published in our magazine.



Robby the Robot, the sensation from **FORBIDDEN PLANET**, teams up with Richard Eyer, aka **THE INVISIBLE BOY**, to save the Earth.



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Like what you see? Want to see more? Send us an Ack!-ives request for something specific at:

YOUAXEDFORIT@FAMOUSMONSTERS.COM

If you're lucky, we'll publish it in the next issue of FM!



Lon Chaney Jr. as one of **THE ALLIGATOR PEOPLE** (1959) sings to Beverly Garland his favorite song from the Hiss Parade: "Teeth for Two & Two for Teeth"

VINTAGE FM STAR WARS

When STAR WARS began to dominate the covers of *Famous Monsters*, a curious thing happened: "Spectacular" issues devoted entirely to the film started to appear, and the wonderful, painted covers that the magazine was known for began to disappear. STAR WARS ultimately changed FM in more ways than one...



PREVIEW

THE X-FILES RETURNS

BY DAVID MEYER

The Truth Is Out There

THE X-FILES returns to television on January 24th, kicking off a six-episode miniseries event on FOX, with David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson back in fine form as Mulder and Scully. More than a decade has passed since the show signed off following an unprecedented nine-year run and two theatrical movies. Creator Chris Carter is once again masterminding the series, writing and directing some of the episodes (with the remaining new episodes helmed and scripted by original series vets Glen Morgan, Duane Morgan, and James Wong), and he gives FM a preview of what to expect (I want to believe Carter is telling us the truth, but if I've learned anything from the show, it's to TRUST NO ONE).

Famous Monsters: Had you written off the idea of a reunion series? Did you have to lobby David and Gillian to come back, or were they always wanting to do another X-FILES at some point?

Chris Carter: It really wasn't talked about until I got a phone call from [FOX Chief] Dana Walden asking us if we had any interest in bringing back the television show. There was talk about a third movie, but the television component hadn't been considered by me. But when they talked about it and when they said the actors were interested, I came aboard. David and Gillian and I had a meeting and we talked about how we would approach the short series, which was supposed to be a series of eight, but then turned into a series of six. There was talk originally of doing the show in Los Angeles, but when it moved to Vancouver, I think schedules dictated the half dozen [episodes].

FM: Do you credit fan demand and the power of social media as a critical factor in convincing the FOX brass to give the series a green light?

CC: I think it was twofold. I think that it was certainly that there is still a hardcore audience out there for it, and a vocal audience. But it's now in fashion to bring

back old titles and to dust them off and take advantage of the familiarity of titles.

FM: The world has changed a lot since THE X-FILES left the air. How has the world within the show evolved in the context of your new story?

CC: It's changed in that it takes place in a contemporary context, a new modern context, where we live in a CITIZENFOUR world now. When 14 years ago there may have been absolute trust in the government, I think we're seeing distrust in that sort of blind trust.

FM: The kick-off episode has a very interesting and unexpected twist on the Roswell story, alien abductions, and alien technology. What can you tease about that and how it plays out over the course of the miniseries?

CC: Well, we took advantage of well-established folklore and what is a mythology apart from the X-FILES mythology, but certainly central to it, which is the idea that in the 1940s there were a series of crashes that are believed to have been UFOs, some of which may have been recovered. And we make that a part of our contemporary storytelling by connecting the two in an interesting way.

FM: The theories you present, combined with the contemporary CITIZENFOUR context you described, are extremely compelling and convincing in the new miniseries. Is this simply fabrication for entertainment and meant to be thought-provoking? How much of this conspiracy theory introduced do you actually subscribe to in reality?



"We live in a CITIZENFOUR world now."



TOP RIGHT: Joel McHale's conservative talk-show host recruits Mulder & Scully for an alien abduction investigation. **RIGHT:** Chris Carter writes and directs three episodes of the six-episode miniseries.



CC: (laughs) I subscribe to what I would call a sort of general idea that there is something like a new world order developing, and to what great or lesser extent, I have no idea.

FM: And if you did, you couldn't tell us anyway.

CC: (laughs) Right.

FM: Would you consider this X-FILES miniseries accessible to casual fans and new recruits to the show? Or do you need to be really caught up on the details and conspiracy theories of the past episodes?

CC: I think it strikes a balance, and we do a quick catch-up at the very beginning of the episode that I think really lays out what the show is, the ground that it has covered in its long run, and where we might find it now.

That was by design because we do want to attract new viewers.

FM: You're still using the same opening credit sequence, which is unexpected; one would think you might create a new version. What was your thought process there?

CC: I really love that opening sequence, and to monkey with it would have been easy, and maybe expected. And as you're saying, it's kind of unexpected that we don't mess with what I think is a signature element of the show.

FM: For me, the unchanged opening symbolizes that while time has gone by, it's still the X-FILES you know and love, and nothing's changed—you're just starting new episodes and a new, connective story.

CC: I think that's a really good way to look at it. People are calling it a 10th season. It is certainly a portion, or incremental to what we did through nine seasons of the show. But that said, I think it flows right out of what was done before.

FM: When you started filming, how was the chemistry on the set? Did it feel much like old times, or had the vibe changed?

CC: It did seem like old times. I have to tell you that our first day of work together, there was so much to do that nobody had time to sort of even acknowledge that this was a new beginning, because we had to dive so quickly back in. That said, I think that everyone acknowledged that this was momentous for us. It was a nice, creative, productive atmosphere, certainly.

FM: We're hoping the new miniseries will do well. If ratings are solid, can we expect even more X-FILES in the future?

CC: The better we do in the ratings, the more appetite there will be by the people who are our partners for going forward. But I think that everyone's adopting a wait-and-see attitude right now. We sense that there's a hardcore audience out there, but beyond that, it certainly is anyone's guess as to what kind of audience there will be, compared to what audience there was. Everyone is pinned for it, but everyone is also busy. Gillian went off and did a movie, David has his NBC series [AQUARIUS]. There's plenty of work being done apart from THE X-FILES, so it really would be about finding the time where everybody could accommodate to do it.

THE X-FILES debuts with a special two-night event beginning Sunday, January 24, 2016, following the *NFL Championship Game*, and continues with its two-episode premiere on Monday, January 25. Get the latest X-FILES news on Twitter @theofffiles





FORCE FRENZY

BY DAVID WEINER



Most never thought we'd see the day. Excitement is at a fever pitch for the brand-new STAR WARS installment. But just how did it defy the odds and get made in the first place?

Never tell me the odds." The first time THE FORCE AWAKENS ever got made is nothing short of a miracle. Following the 1983 release of RETURN OF THE JEDI, the final working against any direct sequel being produced ever were overruling. Harrison Ford had wanted Han Solo killed off. Franchise creator George Lucas publicly declared that he was worn out from producing three STAR WARS films. After the destruction of two Death Stars, the storyline seemed to be devoid of fresh ideas for our heroes. Everyone seemed to just want to take a long, well-deserved break. So a decade went by, and then something unexpected happened. STAR WARS got old. Scattered to the four winds, there was no new hope for the original cast to return for any more films. There were mashups of a long-term development, live-action STAR WARS television series, but huge production costs proved to be prohibitive. In the '80s, there were some throwaway Saturday morning kiddie cartoons featuring Ewoks and C-3PO and R2-D2, but they didn't last very long. As more time went by, time became less forgiving, and the STAR WARS trilogy started to feel like a spectacular one-shot deal.

Perhaps it was the decline of merchandising sales that woke Lucas up. Looking into his crystal ball from his Meditation Chamber, Lucas could see that the films that built his empire might eventually be adapted to a '70s-'80s entertainment time capsule. They'd be fondly remembered as the force that changed the nature of the cinematic blockbuster — but perhaps become nothing more than that footnote in the Hollywood history of decades to come.

Knowing that a new generation needed their own STAR WARS, not their parents' old ones, Lucas seemed rejuvenated and

ready for his life. He would write and direct three more movies set in a galaxy far, far away. Knowing that Ford had less than two months in training for more adventures, fueled by my mad other motivations, Lucas specifically chose to make the trilogy, prospects he had once envisioned back when he was inspired by FLASH GORDON results and the dreams of Alan Kinsawa to map out THE ADVENTURES OF LUKE STARKILLER. With the back-breaking, back-to-back production of THE PHANTOM MENACE, ATTACK OF THE CLONES, and REVENGE OF THE SITH, a new era of STAR WARS was born. A CLONE WARS animated series was also produced to fill in the narrative gaps. Merchandise once again flew off the shelves, all conversation turned back to the franchise, and legions of children dressed up as Clone Troopers for Halloween and called a young Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi their own.

Well, we all know how that went. Despite that initial fever pitch, the prospects were not well received by a majority of Original Trilogy fans and, love 'em or hate 'em, Lucas had once again painted himself into a story-telling corner. He could have looked to the spotty success of the long-running STAR TREK TV franchise and told new tales of alternate characters and storylines within the expanded STAR WARS universe he shepherded. But even if he wanted to tell tales of Luke, Leia and Han's next generation, a million little reasons self-censored against any future films actually being produced starring the power trio of Ford, Mark Hamill and Carrie Fisher.

But something happened. Time went by for Ford too. His fatigue and enforced passive-aggressive resentment seemed to solidify and disappear. He had returned to play Indiana Jones

for Lucas's 2001's INDIANA JONES AND THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL and actually enjoyed the experience. The return success of that film also confirmed that audiences hunger for more from their favorite characters would forgive the sands of time and welcome weather-beaten versions of them. This time it was the years, not the mileage — but Ford didn't care. They wanted Jones. They wanted Solo. So Lucas went about reuniting the old gang behind closed doors, and somehow got them to agree to come back for at least one more galaxy hop on the Falcon if he played his cards right. And play those cards he did. Promote about his legacy, but also ready to act, he placed STAR WARS — and all of Lucasfilm, Ltd., in the hands of Disney to create its solid, protected future — in exchange for \$4 billion. Not bad.

Disney circled their creative wagon immediately following the October 2012 purchase of Lucasfilm. Speculation buzz about what would happen next was white hot. There was no director. No one knew who would star in the films or what the stories would be, about. Still, with Lucas Spielberg producer Kathleen Kennedy was now running Lucasfilm. Other than the declaration that there would be three more planned sequels to the main STAR WARS story line (with TOY STORY 3 and LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE writer Michael Aard) penning the initial screenplay draft, plus stand-alone spinoff movies to fill the gaps in between the main story releases, no one knew any thing.

I interviewed Mark Hamill in February 2013 for ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT about another project of his, a great, gritty little gangster drama called SUSHI GIRL. Not expecting an actual response, I asked him if we could expect to see Luke Skywalker in the



LEFT: Director J.J. Abrams and writer Lawrence Kasdan on the FORCE AWAKENS set. RIGHT: After creating six STAR WARS movies, George Lucas has retired.





newly announced suspects. Harsell unexpectedly broke the news to cast that he, Ford, and Fisher would indeed be returning. He explained, "George wanted to know whether we'd be resurrected. He did say that if we didn't want to do it, they wouldn't cost another actor in our parts—they would write us out." Fisher immediately said yes to the return, and Harsell knew that if the sold he'd also hear the end of it from him. Ford clearly was on-board too, and a calendar call before the official cast was announced by Disney. I had secured a title place in STAR WARS history by sharing Harsell's news with the world that the original cast was coming back.

Enter J.J. Abrams as the top choice to direct STAR WARS EPISODE VII, soon to be known as THE FORCE AWAKENS. With a fresh pedigree that included two STAR TREK films that arguably had a lot more to do with STAR WARS than TREK, Abrams has always publicly declared his unabashed love for STAR WARS. At Anaheim's fan-packed STAR WARS CELEBRATION they've re-created first falling for Lucas merchandise. "I was 11 years old when it came out. Eleven was a great age to have my mind blown. I'll never forget that feeling of seeing a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. Fade out, and those words hit the screen as if that incredible music, and it was that moment on that just transported me. It was the first time it made me laugh that way, and made me believe in another world that way, and it was really George Lucas brilliance not only creating these incredible characters and this amazing universe, [but] also that it had such heart. And the biggest thing for me is it had such hope. And that to me was incredibly powerful, even at 11 years old."

If any thing, Abrams is a true film geek himself and has proven himself to be convinc-

sively tapping into the desires of millions of STAR WARS fans. He knows what we like. Visually, he knows what we want. And he knows intimately that he'll win fans in or if he stacks the new STAR WARS deck with as many artists and elements from the Original Trilogy that we know and love. That means using major production design elements by the late Ralph McQuarrie. Recreating EMPIRE and JEDI winner Lawrence Kasdan follows Jedi's departure. Filming set pieces at Pinewood Studios. Using Sound Design by Ben Burtt. Locking down John Williams for the score. And despite their physical frailties as older actresses, putting Peter Mayhew back in his Chewbacca. Anthony Daniels back in Threepio's chassis. And Kenny Baker back inside R2 (with vacation of the worldwide R2-D2 Builder's Club, like Lee Torensey and Oliver Scarples, to handle the associated dread of other movie moments).

A key concern on many minds, and Harsell was vocal about this too, was whether or not Abrams would limit the CGI on effects that had permeated Lucas' Prequel Trilogy and tangibly smashed the screen, making it look more like a video game than in a sci-fi film. Fortunately, Abrams allay of concern by explaining, "When we were working on pre-production of the movie, the thing that struck me — and it wouldn't get out of my head — is just how real you knew, and felt STAR WARS was. You just saw A NEW HOPE. Whether they were shooting in Tunisia or on various physical tangible sets, you couldn't deny it. There are going to be an endless number of effects that will be done [in FORCE AWAKENS]. CG and otherwise, of course. We needed ... to set a standard that was real, that felt like you know the people were in those places. The way the light interacts with the set, you want it to be

legitimate. You want it to be authentic. Building as much as we possibly could was really the mindset. You don't need to use your imagination because we actually have these sets there. And it was great for the actors too."

That recent 10-filmed Millennium Falcon was once again constructed, details were ascribed, puppets and miniature creatures were brought to life, and gaudy sets were put in place in lieu of words of great scenes. And the crew also went around the world on location to capture the best landscapes available to film, including Ireland and Abu Dhabi, doubling for the desert planet of Jakku. "STAR WARS is so much a Western and a fairy tale as it is anything else," continued Abrams. "One of the things that you expect and want to see are real, tangible. John Ford beautiful landscapes, and shooting in Abu Dhabi provided just that. It was an incredible thing to be there."

Once the world gets to see THE FORCE AWAKENS, there will be debates, but there will no doubt also be disappointment. No one can ever fully recreate the magic of the first STAR WARS films, because any new product ultimately relies on meeting or exceeding some seriously high expectations. But this time around, we may be pleasantly surprised.

"They say, 'You can't please everybody, though we are trying very hard to do just that,'" says Abrams. "There are moments where the pressure of what we're doing, the responsibility of what we're doing — honoring the legacy, but moving the legacy to tell a brand-new story that moves forward, that makes the fans proud — it's the most important thing that we're all working on. I will say, that though there are moments of ... sheer terror as to what that is, the reality is I've never had more fun in my life working on anything. The opportunity for on-sets, the risk of this, and I can't wait for you to see them."

THE NEW FACES OF



**THE FORCE AWAKENS Director
J.J. ABRAMS**

After working as a writer for hire, the fourth director to helm a STAR WARS film became a big name on TV with FELICITY, ALIAS, and LOST. Following his MISSION IMPOSSIBLE II feature debut,

Abrams fashioned himself into Spielberg's creative successor with SUPER 8 and revitalized the STAR TREK franchise. TMZ.COM/1274957562



JOHN BOYEGA

With only four feature credits under his belt, the 23-year-old Londoner made a big impact in BOY 1's alien-invasion-the-project film ATTACK THE BLOCK as villain-turned-hero. Movies: He has described his role as AWOL First Order trooper Finn as "motivated by fear."

TMZ.COM/1274957562

**LUCASFILM PRESIDENT/STAR WARS
PRODUCER KATHLEEN KENNEDY**



A longtime Steven Spielberg producer, Kennedy served in the 70s and '80s blockwater production trenches that STAR WARS itself helped generate, so it's only fitting that she returns to the franchise.

George Lucas personally appointed her to oversee his Lucasfilm empire after its \$4 billion sale to Disney in 2012.

TMZ.COM/1274957562



OSCAR ISAAC

Ridley Scott plays Rey, a scrap collector on the desert planet Jakku alongside droid companion BB-8. A relative newcomer with mostly indie TV to her credit, we know she's a star as a speeder as cool as Luke from A NEW HOPE, and she looks great running from explosions.

TMZ.COM/1274957562



DAISY RIDLEY

With a slew of awards under his belt and critically acclaimed performances in such films as INSIDE LLEWYN DAVIS and EX MACHINA, the 35-year-old Isaac describes his X-Wing resistance pilot Poe Dameron as the "best fuckin' pilot in the galaxy."

TMZ.COM/1274957562



STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS begins in theaters December 18

THE FORCE AWAKENS



ADAM DRIVER

Intimidatingly tall and stoic, 32-year-old Adam Driver made waves romancing Leia Dunham in *GIRLS*. His Kylo Ren is determined to pick up the mantle of Darth Vader and destroy the resistance and the Jedi with his self-built, crossguard lightsaber, which became the talk of the Internet.

R7K7JEDW-JD7WVA



ANDY SERKIS

Best known for his performances as Gollum, King Kong, and Caesar the Ape, the 51-year-old Brit once joked about getting motion-capture dolls tattooed on his face. He goes mo-cap once again as Supreme Leader Snoke, a powerful figure on the Dark Side and Kylo Ren's superior.

16J-NHY7N7UJ-ND7D7V

The 32-year-old son of Irish actor Brendan Gleeson plays First Order officer General Hux, commander of the First Order's Starkiller base. Before *THE FORCE AWAKENS*, he was best known for the sassy time-travel love story *ABOUT TIME*, Anguina Jolie's *UNBROKEN*, and *EX MACHINA*, alongside Oscar Isaac.

16J-NHY7N7UJ-ND7D7V



DOM MONAGHAN

Mexican-born, Korean-music Nying's won the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for playing the slave Patsy in 2013's Best Picture winner *12 YEARS A SLAVE*. Like Andy Serkis, the 32-year-old used motion capture to play apes, gorilla Mike Koroas, appearing onscreen as a totally CG figure.

R7K7JEDW-JD7WVA



LUPITA NYONG'O



OSCAR ISAAC

It's a new age of equality and female empowerment, so why shouldn't a woman wear the most iconic sci-fi armor since the original design? 37-year-old Brit (who's played her before in *GAME OF THRONES*) and will only further cement her place in pop history as Captain Phasma.

R7K7JEDW-JD7WVA



MARK HAMILL

The 66-year-old Swedish-French von Sydow made his mark in Bergmeier's *THE SEVENTH SEAL*, as Father Merrin in *THE EXORCIST*, and as Ming the Merciless in *FLASH GORDON*. You might wonder how many other enduring movie universes the multi-award winner has possibly lent his name to.

16J-NHY7N7UJ-ND7D7V

STAR WARS RETURN OF THE OLD GUARD

In addition to the new and familiar faces of STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS, we are more than excited to see our Original Trilogy friends back for new adventures. Here's a lightspeed breakdown of what they've been up to over the past three decades.



Best known as the daughter of Hollywood royalty, Ewok Fisher and Debbie Reynolds before, STAR WARS made her the biggest actress in the galaxy. Fisher became one of Hollywood's top women (POSTICIOUS FROM THE EDGE, WISHFUL DRINKING), working steadily behind-the-scenes when not performing in the spotlight with humor, wit, and class.

Carrie Fisher



Like Fisher, Mark Hamill often chose to pursue off-camera endeavors over STAR WARS, acting on stage and carving out a second life of geek worship thanks to lots of voice-over work, making him a household name for Kevin Smith, and memorably cackling as The Joker in the early '90s animated Batman series.

Mark Hamill



In between piloting planes and maintaining his A-list standing for as many as three decades, no one ever thought Ford would ever return to play Han Solo. The one-two punch of the most beloved characters in cinema history — Han Solo and Indiana Jones — earns him a free pass for life.

Harrison Ford



A classically trained actor before Lucas approached him to play a robot that talked like a thick salesman, Daniels instead suggested a stuffy secretary brother. He made the role of C-3PO his own, and has barely played anything else since. "I don't think The Godfather. I don't think The Godfather."

Anthony Daniels



Although his face has never been seen in a STAR WARS film, Baker has portrayed everyone in the entire galaxy, from the Ewok that steals a quadbike in RETURN OF THE JEDI. He also appeared on such hits as TIME BANDITS, WILLOW, LABYRINTH, and FLASH GORDON.

Kenny Baker



The 7'3" Mayhew has made a very respectable living out of the role that defined him: Lucas offered the former hospital orderly (after Charles and Frank Vader, and 30 years later he never seems to run out of carbonium) for playing a creature that Princess Leia dreamed of as a "walking carpet."

Peter Mayhew

Inspired by Tom Chantrell's enduring, internationally used 1977 STAR WARS poster art, we recruited celebrated artist Terry Wallinger to recreate the same look and feel with the characters and hardware of THE FORCE AWAKENS for our retail cover.



STAR WARS ROGUE ONE

STANDALONES AND SEQUELS

By DREW TURNER



ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY

Arriving almost a year to the day after *STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS* on December 16, 2016, *ROGUE ONE* is the first of many planned standalone "anthology" movies connected to the events or characters of the whole *STAR WARS* universe. Filmmakers James Wand, Michael, Doug Linn, Forest Whitaker, Devine Yori, Alan Tudyk, and Ben Mendelsohn all star in the film set before the events of *A NEW HOPE*, telling the story of the race to steal the Death Star plans that would ultimately give the Rebel Alliance the crucial advantage in the Battle of Yavin. You know. The blueprint that showed where the battle stations and port weakness was located.

Though it isn't referenced by name in *STAR WARS: Operations*, the book details the plan into the hands of rebel leader Leia Organa, who hid them in an R2 unit when her ship came under attack by an Imperial cruiser, setting off the chain of events we all know and love.

ROGUE ONE comes with almost as good a pedigree as *THE FORCE AWAKENS*. After blowing critics and audiences away with his head-tooled debut *MONSTERS* in 2010, British director Gareth Edwards (who did *GOJIRA* in 2014 and *J.J. Abrams* had done for the *STAR TREK* franchise. For *ROGUE ONE*, Edwards promises a primer experience than the *Star Wars* canon spectacle of *Lucas* or *Abrams*, saying that the tone of the best movie could be found in the title. It will be a war movie.

STAR WARS EPISODE VIII and IX

Other than select cast and crew/producer announcements, details about *STAR WARS EPISODE VIII* and *IX* are few. *LOOPER* director Rian Johnson proved his Sci-Fi chops with his 2012 time-travel thriller starring Bruce Willis and Joseph Gordon-Levitt, and as a result he's now he's directing *EPISODE VIII* with a screenplay/story credit for *EPISODE IX*. Initially lined up to direct both sequels, Johnson has stepped aside and *JURASSIC WORLD* director Colin Trevorrow will take on helming chores for *IX*. Interestingly, Trevorrow made his mark on Hollywood with another time-travel tale: the clever indie *SAFETY NOT GUARANTEED*.

When Trevorrow's dream job was announced at Disney's D23 Expo in August, the director proclaimed, "This is not a job or an assignment. It is a seat at a campfire, surrounded by an extraordinary group of storytellers, filmmakers, artists and fans/people. We've been charged with telling new stories for a younger generation because they deserve what we all had—a mythology to call their own. We will do this by channeling something George Lucas instilled in all of us: boundless creativity, pure imagination and hope."

Here's what we do know: *EPISODE VIII* will hit theaters May 26, 2017, while *EPISODE IX* is scheduled for a 2019 release. The sequels will be part of the canon and a continuation of *THE FORCE AWAKENS*. Because *Del Toro* has been added to the cast and stand to play the villain of *EPISODE VIII*, and through no titles has been announced, the film is rumored to be called *STAR WARS: THE ORDER OF THE DARK SIDE*.



THE HAN SOLO ANTHOLOGY FILM

As soon as the "standalone" *STAR WARS* films were announced to be happening, with the intention to introduce them to both new and old fans of the series franchise, rumors said that we'd see a proper introduction to how Han Solo became a gambler, smuggler, and scoundrel before he became a *Rebel* war hero and princess lover. No fool to what fans want, Disney announced we'd get exactly that on May 25, 2018. It's being directed by Chris Miller and Phil Lord, the wunderkinds behind the 21 *JUMP STREET* reboot, *CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATS*, *SLICK*, and the lovably clever *LEGO MOVIE*.

The writing team of Lawrence Krasner and Jon Jon whose short credit includes *BREAKS AND GEERS* makes perfect sense, but isn't the Lord/Miller opportunity a little weird? Not in the least. Think about it—they've been among the funniest of recent years, and if there's anything that defines Han Solo, it's his disdain for self-important pomp and popularity and his way sense of humor. Of the announced *Star Wars* Han Solo project, the duo said, "This is the first film we've worked on that seems like a good idea to begin with. We promise to make risks, to give the audience a fresher experience, and we pledge ourselves to be faithful towards the characters who mean so much to us. This is a dream come true for us. And not the kind of dream where you're late for work and all your clothes are made of pudding, but the kind of dream where you get to make a film with some of the greatest characters ever, in a film franchise you've loved since before you can remember having dreams at all. The question of who is going to play Solo remains."



MARK HAMILL:

MASTER JEDI & TIMELESS MONSTER KID

LUKE SKYWALKER HIMSELF SPEAKS WITH FAMOUS MONSTERS ABOUT THE SURREAL AND EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE HE HAD RETURNING TO A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY — AND SHARES HIS POTENT NOSTALGIA FOR FAMOUS MONSTERS MAGAZINE!

BY DAVID WEINER



WE'RE GUSHING OVER MARK HAMILL AND STAR WARS;
MARK HAMILL IS GUSHING OVER FAMOUS MONSTERS AND FORREST J ACKERMAN!



We all know that STAR WARS is a pop-culture juggernaut. And with *THE FORCE AWAKENS* finally here, everyone wants to talk to the stars of the franchise, old and new. What most people don't take into account is the fact that demand for garbieries to get a minute with any one involved with the new J.J. Abrams-directed film. Many notable outlets would be so lucky if they could rub a five-minute interview with that third Stormtrooper to the right who was in that one scene on that one day.

Lucky for us, Mark Hamill holds a special place in his heart for *Famous Monsters*. A longtime fan since childhood, he graciously made time to speak with us not only about his experience with *THE FORCE AWAKENS*, but about the furies of *Fury* that guided his formative years towards the career that he is internationally known for today. "*Famous Monsters* really played an important part in my life, and in my decision and my belief that working in the areas that I wanted to pursue was a possibility at all," says Hamill, now 64 years young. "My very first issue I bought was issue #89 in the summer of 1962, with the *TALES OF TERROR* cover with Peter Lorre, Basil Rathbone, and Vincent Price. It was the first time I made the leap from buying a comic book to something that was five times as expensive, and I begged my mom to buy it for me."

As far as his passions and interests were concerned, Hamill was born at the right time. A lone fan of monster movies and seven siblings' apathetic to creature features, he stumbled onto the *Monster Cruise* that had reached full swing in the early '60s when he was about 10 years old. In addition to *PM* magazine, he was mesmerized by King Kong and the lure of Aureson model monster kits. "I'll never forget walking into any local five and ten-cent store — I remember it as clear as if it were yesterday — where I first saw the Frankenstein model kit," he recalls. "This was in a world where there were only military hardware and airplane

models and things that didn't really interest me, and then all of a sudden there was that magic toy that changed my life. I should also say that one of the most important movies I saw as a kid was the original 1933 *KING KONG*. It was absolutely a traumatic experience to see this wonderful creature killed. It was devastating, and I was just obsessed with this film."

For Hamill, *Famous Monsters* was more than just a magazine; it occupied the hazy years of life. It was a tool that exposed him to a whole new world. "It was something that fueled your imagination and told you how these things were done. I'll never forget the King Kong cover the 'Special Photo Filmbook Issue.' This was the first time I ever saw photographs of Willis O'Brien and Marcel Delgado, the mannequin sets they built, and the explanation of stop-frame photography. It was a major, major revelation for me. So I'm very grateful to *Famous Monsters*. It really was a very, very important part of my childhood. That was my education. That was my film school when I was still 10 years old."

After *STAR WARS* established itself as a worldwide phenomenon, Hamill says that he used his newly minted clout as a "celebrity" to meet *Fury* in person. "I remember thinking [as a kid], 'I want to cater that customized model kit contest so I could go to Hollywood, Katoomba, and meet Forrest J Ackerman!' laughs the star. "I saw his legendary collection and was able to thank him face-to-face, and that was a very big deal for me."

He concludes: "When [Disney publicity] said there was an opportunity to talk to you guys today, I just thought 'Wouldn't that be great to be able to thank them for what they meant in my life, and my decision to go into this [career]?' *Famous Monsters* was something that was very, very special to me, and the fact that it's been around for more than half a century is a testament to its importance in the pop-culture world."

A GIFT FIT FOR A KING

Hamill exclusively shares this tale with *PM* of the ultimate gift he received. "As a present for my last birthday in 2014, I got a package from J.J. Abrams. Inside there was a photograph of the [recent] gifting the names of Skull Island in 1977's *KING KONG* appeared in full costumes and walking with their shields and spears. I was on the front paper around, and there was one of the original puppets that these actors were looking. On the back there's a small tag that reads: BKO Pictures, Inc., Culver City, California. I was gobsmacked. It didn't seem to me that it should be in a private collection by any means; it should be in a company museum behind glass. It's like no other present I'd ever had."



BACK IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY...

INSIGHTS AND SECRETS FROM THE SET OF STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS

Mark Hamill's contributions to film and television, onscreen and in the voice-over field, are truly immeasurable. Returning to play Luke Skywalker again more than 30 years after the original STAR WARS trilogy ended has been an almost indescribable experience for the modest actor.

Famous Monsters: You must be a bit stunned to be back in a galaxy far, far away and have a whole new film under your belt playing Luke Skywalker. Mark Hamill: That's putting it mildly. I still can't believe it's happening. It's just surreal. I thought certainly if they go forward, that it wouldn't be a surprise to me, but it would be focused on a new generation. ... It is about setting up the next generation of heroes and villains, but the fact that half a dozen cast members from the originals can be there to place it in some sort of context, to be there for the historical side of things. I think it's wonderful. ... Young people can see the progression of the characters. I'm old enough to be Luke's grandfather now, and that's a healthy, natural thing for people to see.

FM: Ironically, you made *FORCE AWAKENS* at the same age that Sir Alec Guinness was when he made *STAR WARS*. That must have been emotionally moving for you. **MH:** Absolutely, because there's nobody that I've worked with in the entire saga that had as profound an impact on me as Alec Guinness has. Intellectually, I know I'm the same age as Alec Guinness. Emotionally, I'm thinking, "Are you kidding me?" I still like *The Three Stooges* and the *Rolling Stones*. How could I be old?

FM: How was your experience working with these new, younger cast members, and did you impart any wisdom on handling the attention after having such an as-alanche *STAR WARS* experience yourself over your lifetime?

MH: First of all, I should say that when I read the script and saw what they had in store for the film, it was thrilling. The new story line, the new characters, and especially the actors that they chose to play them, are thrilling.

beyond words. At that table read, I had an idea of how they would look and sound but then to see them do it in person. I thought, "Oh my gosh, the saga is in great hands because these people are so talented." Did I request any sort of advice? Well, the answer as they could probably give me advice, they're so accomplished and so beyond what I expected. But in terms of how they're going to process what's in store for them, that's impossible. People say, "What is it like to be in *STAR WARS*?" Well, we have sort of a unique perspective of what it's like to not be in *STAR WARS*, because it's born beyond what any of us expected. I long ago realized that this doesn't belong to me in the way I imagined. It really belongs to the world.

FM: Did you have trepidations about returning for a new *STAR WARS* sequel, and how was it to work with a new set of franchise caretakers?

MH: [With the original trilogy], some might say we caught lightning in a bottle and you're not going to be able to do that. (continued)

LUKE BEFORE YOU LEAP



OPPOSITE PAGE: The first and love FM covers of Hamill's youth. **RIGHT:** Making *FORCE AWAKENS*, Hamill was the exact same age as Sir Alec Guinness when he filmed *STAR WARS*.



again. I think [THE FORCE AWAKENS] could be every bit as exciting for the audience. [But] it's not going to be like it was then, when we're sitting around in the Death Star, and exchanging guns, and jockeying for the affections of the princess. It's going to be age appropriate. The story has moved on, and our purpose in the story is different than it was then. So it's not like we're trying to go back and recapture former glory—I do think that it's significant that it's the first of the films that is as the hands of the fan generation. ... We know that Rian Johnson is doing VIII and that Colin Trevorrow is doing IX; they're all of that next generation that were children when they first saw the films, and then became professionals themselves. That's very exciting, because we're seeing how they interpret what they experienced as young children.

FM: With all the upcoming standalone films, from *ROGUE ONE* to the young *BIAN SOLO* film, are there any characters or concepts that you'd love to see?

MH: One of the things I think is a tremendous advantage for the standalone films is the very fact that they do stand alone. They have a beginning, a middle, and an end. You can establish the premise, get it on, get it done, and get off and leave the audience wanting more. The structure of a trilogy is much more intimidating because it's like a three-act play. EPISODE VII ends and that's the end of Act I. So I think the standalone films have a chance to be meat and lean and get into areas that were unavailable to the more grandiose trilogy films.

But in terms of specific characters I'd like to see? That's the thing—it's just such a vast canvas and there are so many characters that I find interesting. I'd love

to find out about Yoda's background and where he came from, and who were his mentors. Because I remember when I read *EMPIRE*...

FM: With three sets of trilogies now, *STAR WARS* has become a generational phenomenon; parents are proud to sit in the theater with their kids to watch their first reactions. We get to relive our childhood vicariously. When people look back at *STAR WARS* years from now, what do you think its significance in history will be?

MH: Well, they're modern-day fairytales. We're still looking at Disney's *SNOW WHITE* and other fantasies that have stood the test of time. I think that's one of the advantages, because it's in the galaxy far, far away, people enjoy that escapism. They want to go there and be relieved of the pressures of their real lives. ... Storytelling is so part of who we are, and how we explain ourselves, and how we figure out where we fit in the world. As long as people have that sense of wonder about [*STAR WARS* films], I don't think they'll ever fade away.

But gosh, I never thought we'd still be talking about it all these years later! (laughs) It's really a gift. ... Everyone thinks of you as a member of their family. They all know you. ... I've had this special bond with the world now for decades, and it sounds corny when you talk about it, but it's really been something that I've appreciated. Sometimes it's absolutely overwhelming, and even moving, to hear how something that was just meant for a couple of hours' diversion has impacted people's lives. I'm so lucky to have had something so positive and so optimistic. 🌟

Follow Mark Hamill on Facebook and Twitter: @HowellHamill

ATTENTION PHIL KELLAND:

Remember that day in the early '70s when you and Mark stumbled upon *Famous Monsters of Filmland* 50 cents? Though Mark graciously let you have it, he now wants it back! In exchange, he'll get you in to see *THE FORCE AWAKENS* on his quest. Get in touch now, Phil!



to find out about Yoda's background and where he came from, and who were his mentors. Because I remember when I read *EMPIRE*... I thought Yoda was the real breakout character, and something that we'd never seen before, and something that

"The new storyline, the new characters, and especially the actors that they chose to play them, are thrilling beyond words."



NEXT ISSUE: MORE MARK HAMILL MONSTER KID MEMORIES!

STAR WARS QUIZ

SO YOU have seen STAR WARS twice... 5 times... 10?

S You've consumed more Mars Bars while watching it than there were Aliens in the famous Space Bar scene?

OK, then let's see how closely you were paying attention.

Would Ben Kaceli be proud of you?

Would Artoo Dectoo give you a raspberry?

Would Chewbacca give a snort that would knock a wart off a warthog at 40 paces?

Test your knowledge!

First Reader to get 100% right gets a kiss from Princess Organa—just as soon as George Pal comes back from the future in HG Wells' *Time Machine*.

1. Besides being a princess, Leia Organa had another title. What was it?

2. What was the first landmark See Threepie came to on the desert of Tatopine after his landing on the planet?

3. What were the full names of Luke's Uncle & Aunt?

4. Luke and his uncle bought See Threepia from the Jaws because he knew what language?

5. How did Kenobi know, from the Bantha tracks, that it wasn't the Tusken Raiders who killed the Jawas?



6. Can you recall the name of the sponsor where Luke first met Han Solo & Chewbacca?

7. To whom did Han Solt pass money?

8. How was Han Solo able to escape the Imperial Ships chasing him from Tatooine? Name Han's ship in your answer.

9. Which planet did Leia Organa falsely name as the location of the rebel base?

10. When Solo's ship reached the Alderaan System, what did they find there?

11. Name one of the guards Luke & Solo replaced on the Death Star. Hint: His name was also the title of another George Lucas Science Fiction movie.



12. How did See Threepio & Artoo Deetoo save themselves when the Troopers broke into the Information Control Center on the Death Star?

13. What battle tactic did Han Solo use to scatter and confuse the Troopers who charged him, Luke and the escaping Princess?



14. Name the rebels' true base from which the attack on the Death Star was launched.

15. Can you describe the Death Star's one vulnerable section?

16. Did the rebels believe in "the force" or was such a belief confined to the Jedi Knights? Explain how you know.

17. What were the rebel attack crafts called? Hint: Remember the shape of their wings.

18. Name Luke's designation in the rebel squadron.

STAR WARS BONUS QUIZ

Next to each character place the letter which corresponds to his or her rank or planet of origin. Warning: These are dummy answers which do not match any of the characters, and a few characters have the same answer.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1. ORSANA [] | A. General |
| 2. TAGGE [] | B. Carellian |
| 3. FORKINS [] | C. Governor |
| 4. VADER [] | D. Doctorine |
| 5. DOGONNA [] | E. Lord |
| 6. SOLD [] | F. Blue Four |
| 7. KENONI [] | G. Alderson |
| 8. TARKIN [] | H. Admiral |

ANSWERS

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[illegible]

THE STAR WARS UNIVERSE

By Ed Miller

With the arrival of **STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS**, it's important that we look back to understand just how we got here and what you need to do to get up to speed. We know that **FORCE AWAKENS** is set three decades after the events of **RETURN OF THE JEDI**, and that there will be standalone films, like the Gareth Edwards-directed **ROGUE ONE**, that will take place at various times throughout the **STAR WARS** timeline. For those new to the game who might be a bit intimidated by the sheer volume of what's out there, this is the best place to begin. And for longtime fans of the series, we've buried a bit of gold in here in the hopes that you might discover something new as well.

STAR WARS EPISODES I-III: THE ANAKIN SKYWALKER TRILOGY

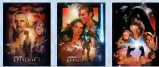
We know, everyone has strong opinions about these movies. We could spend an entire semester debating all the facets of these films, but the one point we can't debate is this: They're canon. Whether you're Team Jar Jar or not, the Corgis, trade characters, Darth Vader's "NOOOOOO!" and members of "NSYNC" participating in EPISODE I's Battle of Geonosis as Jedi Knights (although they were ultimately cut out) are all locked in as part of the official history. But for those who have not had the experience...

This "Prequel Trilogy" (**THE PHANTOM MENACE**, **ATTACK OF THE CLONES**, and **REVENGE OF THE SITH**) has two standout stories that play off of one another. The first is all on the discovery of Jedi prodigy Anakin Skywalker by Obi-Wan Kenobi. The series follows Anakin through his rise and ultimate transformation into one of the most powerful Jedi in existence. This is coupled with the actions of Senator Palpatine and his plans to destabilize the Republic, seize power, and create a galactic empire with a much more sinister bent while attempting to recruit Anakin. The Prequel Trilogy can get a little bogged down in its own nuances as Palpatine attempts to consolidate power through complex trade embargoes, blockades, and missions that would severely, with **ROBERT S. RULING OF ORDER**. But for all the backstab, there's plenty for SW fans new and old to enjoy in the series. Watch it and judge for yourself.



STAR WARS EPISODES IV-VI: THE LUKE SKYWALKER TRILOGY

This is where it all started. If you only ever watch three **STAR WARS** movies, these are the ones. Follow the journey of young Luke Skywalker from moisture farmer to Jedi Master along with his mentor Obi-Wan, Han Solo, Princess Leia, the droids Chewie and so many other beloved characters. The story (**A NEW HOPE**, **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**, and **RETURN OF THE JEDI**) takes place about 18 years after the end of the Prequel Trilogy and is all on a mix of old and new characters in a strengthened Galactic Empire led by Emperor Palpatine and Darth Vader look to destroy the Rebel Alliance with a newly constructed superweapon. The Death Star. Practical effects, a stunning score, lots of homages to *Kurosawa* and *Tolkien*, and a powerful story all combine to make the most famous space opera of all time. It is no coincidence that **STAR WARS** has become the cultural phenomenon that it has. It really is a masterpiece of genre filmmaking. While it's not perfect, it has something for everyone.



THE HEIR TO THE EMPIRE TRILOGY (aka THE THRAWN TRILOGY) Books by Timothy Zahn

You could hear the collective heartbreak of the **STAR WARS** fans when it was announced that all the books from what was called the "Expanded Universe" would no longer be recognized as canon after the Disney purchase of Lucasfilm. Ltd. While frustrating, it was understandable, considering that there have been dozens of books looking to fill in as many gaps between films as possible. Disney would be limited in creating new properties and they'd have to contend with possible inconsistencies and restrictions that so much documented material could produce. That being said...

While **THE THRAWN TRILOGY** (**HEIR TO THE EMPIRE**, **DARK FORCE RISING**, **THE LAST COMMAND**) is not officially part of the grand timeline as more, they are universally praised as the best stories of the Expanded Universe. They were also the oddballs favorites to become **EPISODES VII-IX**, had these books been made into films in the '90s. The story takes place within the decade following the events of **RETURN OF THE JEDI**. It stars all of our favorite characters and feels so authentically like a **STAR WARS** movie you can almost hear the John Williams score playing while flipping the pages. Despite the Rebel Alliance victory, there are still more, very dangerous pieces of the Empire that have survived and are waiting in the wings. Grand Admiral Thrawn is a cunning member of the Galactic Empire who attempts to unify these forces and, using his incredible intellect and some very tricky, anti-Jedi tactics, makes a full assault on the New Republic. The stories give a lot to characters that would become mainstays in the Expanded Universe. Truly an excellent series that every **STAR WARS** fan owes it to him or herself to read.



Honorable book mentions: **DARTH PLAQUEETS**, **TARKIN**, the **DARTH BANE** trilogy, the **STAR WARS LEGACY** comic series, and the **X-WING** series featuring a whole bunch of Wedge Antilles!

THE CLONE WARS

The actual Clone Wars refers to incidents that took place between EPISODES II and III. They were caused by Senator Palpatine manipulating the Galactic Senate into granting him full emergency powers as the result of a massive conflict between the Republic's clone army and droid army of the Separatists. It was a conflict completely orchestrated by the Senator, who at the end of it all would become Emperor Palpatine and pull together the weakened Republic to form what would become the Galactic Empire. The events have been portrayed in two separate animated TV series.



THE CLONE WARS (2003)

Despite the fact that The Clone Wars had been talked about since the first STAR WARS film in 1977, it was never shown in either film or TV. To remedy this, George Lucas hired cartoonist/writer/director Genndy Tartakovsky, who had created the action-packed animated series against THE POWERPUFF GIRLS and SAMURAI JACK, to produce a series of animated shorts depicting the key moments in the battle for the Republic. Using his trademark 2D technique that fused hyper-stylized action and a Sergio Leone-esque sparseness of dialogue, Tartakovsky made a lot of STAR WARS fans very happy by dropping much of what had been seen as the unnecessary melodrama and chattiness of EPISODES I-III and focusing on the action and spectacle the Original Trilogy had been known for. One of the highlights came in episodes 12 and 13 as Jedi Master Windu took on and defeated a droid army of thousands using only his lightsaber and Jedi abilities. With almost no words spoken for six minutes, it captured the essence of badassery that every kid growing up loving STAR WARS knew a Jedi could unleash when turned up to eleven.



THE CLONE WARS (2008)

Looking to expand on the happenings of Tartakovsky's shorts, as well as fill the void of STAR WARS scripted entertainment, Lucas commissioned a full CGI series about The

Clone Wars. Running for six seasons and 121 episodes, the Cartoon Network show was a massive success. The series covered everything from the battles between the Republic and the Separatists to Anakin's slide into the dark side and a greater backstory about the clone creation and lots of details that couldn't be fleshed out in the films. The series made history when it did the seemingly impossible and reanimated EPISODE I fan favorite Darth Maul, new and improved with post-like robot legs. While there was initial skepticism based on his demise in EPISODE 1, his presence was a welcome one as we finally got to see this very popular character—who only had four lines in the first film—live up to his potential and become a true powerhouse in the STAR WARS universe. Both CLONE WARS series are excellently crafted and well worth the time and effort.

STAR WARS REBELS

Launched in 2014, this ongoing CGI-animated series takes place five years before the events of the original STAR WARS (EPISODE IV: A NEW HOPE). Here we see the Empire continuing its efforts to eradicate the Jedi while strengthening its stronghold on the galaxy. The story surrounds the crew of the ship Ghost and their efforts at disrupting the Empire that will plant the seeds for what becomes the Rebel Alliance. Now in its second season, there are many secrets still to be revealed, but the threads connecting REBELS to EPISODE IV are already very apparent. As a bonus, the art style for the series is based on the concept work of STAR WARS designer and art legend Ralph McQuarrie.



Thus ends our trip down memory lane. Time to get down to your homework. Fire up the TV and DVD/Blu-ray player, get Netflix going for a little binge watching, hit the library or the bookstore, and stay the course. Yes, this will all be on the test. And if you don't know who Mara Jade is by the next issue we're sending a note home to your parents.

DIVERGENT PATHS OF THE JEDI

By Ed Staz

One of the most discussed topics amongst STAR WARS fans is the series of changes that George Lucas made to the Original Trilogy decades after its initial theatrical run. From a digital Jabba in EPISODE IV to the giant Rings of Death (Stars), these oft-lamented changes pale in comparison to the seemingly endless changes the stories endured before finally heading into production. In many of these, the proposed characters and events are so different from what we recognize, they feel as if they must be from an entirely different story. While we could write an entire Wookieepedia devoted to roads not traveled in the STAR WARS universe, here are just a few of the places that it could have gone very, very differently.

THE STAR WARS

Looking at that title I'm reminded of the scene in SOCIAL NETWORK, in which Justin Timberlake's character tells Jesse Eisenberg a character to drop the "The" in "The Facebook," making it clearer. Based on Lucas' original 1974 draft, the title was indeed THE STAR WARS. And while the original has some familiar names and places and overall themes, many of the specifics have been re-arranged and created anew. It seemed that many of the differences in the original draft had become things of legend, discussed in hushed whispers between cosplayers at conventions, and it wasn't until 2013 that many of the rumors were substantiated.

Writer J.W. Rinzler—whose Making-of and Story-board books about STAR WARS are the definitive sources for so much of what

went in to creating the films—after combing through the original notes from Lucas, was able to fashion them into a cohesive story and produce an eight-part comic book, published through Dark Horse that told the original story as Lucas had initially envisioned it. While the story involves Jedi (known as Jedi-Bendu) who are an order of warriors with powers and are tasked with protecting and keeping order in the Republic, the story can be very confusing for longtime fans. Imagine if you woke up in the morning and every food item in your cabinet had switched names, and everyone was in on it but you. Bananas look like bananas, but they're now called grapes and are part of the food group known as meats. It would take a little getting used to.

It's much the same with THE STAR WARS. Luke Skywalker is a Jedi, but he's a full-fledged Jedi Master who is tasked with overseeing the training of a new prospect named Anakin Skywalker. There's a Darth Vader, but he has a smaller role, isn't disfigured, and gets talked down to a fair amount. Princess Leia, who is no relation to either of our main characters, has her home world of Aquilae targeted by the Empire because of the planet's highly skilled cloning abilities. Han Solo is now a giant lizard who hunts Wookiees. It's okay, I'll give you a second to read that sentence again. Ultimately there are two droids and our Jedi show up to escort Leia to safety from the threat of the Empire, showing that the strong elements of Kurosawa's THE HIDDEN FORTRESS were always present in one of the earliest drafts of the story. THE STAR WARS is a great read and really gives a lot of insight into how the story evolved along the way. And Dark Horse makes sense of the best collections around, meaning you can find a beautifully collected hardcover of all eight issues. Just be aware that if you're old hat in the SW universe, it will be a bit disorienting seeing familiar names with not-so-familiar faces.



SPLINTER OF THE MIND'S EYE



I'm going to let you in on a not-so-secret truth about STAR WARS: During the production of the original film there was a lot of angst over whether or not it would be successful. If so, it's impossible to imagine a world where STAR WARS had bombed and simply faded away into the trash bin of history, but it was a legitimate concern for the production team. Always the planner, George Lucas was making contingency plans just in case his "Cowboys in Space" opus didn't land with audiences like he hoped. Part of that plan involved hiring Sci-Fi author Alan Dean Foster, who had ghostwritten the novelization of EPISODE IV based on Lucas' notes. His adaptation had hit bookstores a year before the film in 1976 and was called STAR WARS: FROM THE ADVENTURES OF LUKE SKYWALKER. So Lucas set Foster in motion on the sequel while still in production for the first film. Lucas gave Foster a fair amount of latitude, but he insisted that the story be written in a way that, should it be adapted into a screenplay, the resulting film could be produced for a very modest budget. Lucas even hired a very detailed space battle from the manuscript as it was thought it would be too expensive to film. This was the back-up plan.

The story of *SPLINTER OF THE MIND'S EYE* is notable not just for its small scale — a striking contrast to the awe-inspiring space opera we all know and love today — but for the fact that it feels much more like a fantasy novel than a Sci-Fi opus. The story finds Luke and Leia traveling the star system to recruit planets into the Rebel Alliance. After they crash land on a moon-like planet (not Dagobah), they learn of a powerful crystal that can enhance Jedi powers. Setting off to find this sacred artifact, known as the Kaibian orb, Luke, Leia, and Han and their computers are aided by a group of Imperials putting them once again in the crosshairs of Darth Vader. And while *SPLINTER* is a fun story, following the success of STAR WARS in 1977, 20th Century-Fox couldn't write checks to George Lucas fast enough in order to produce a low-budget sequel. So *SPLINTER* became a footnote and Lucas went back to pointing on his grand stars as teaming with Lawrence Kasdan and Irvin Kershner to create *EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*.

HAN SOLO DIES AND REVENGE OF THE JEDI

To close us out we're going to run through some of the more notable changes proposed throughout the series that would have made EPISODE V and VI vastly different movies from what they were. Some are humorous. Some are downright terrifying. Others are a bit of longing for what might have been.

• Lawrence Kasdan, writer of both *THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK* and *RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK* — making him the sole human in all of history to be eligible for the Nobel Prize for being the most awesome being to ever exist on all the suns — often pitched to Lucas the idea of Han Solo being killed off in order to create a sacrifice and kick the actions of the others into gear. Harrison Ford was a supporter of the idea as well. Kasdan went so far as to suggest Han die of the Carbonite freezing process at the end of *EMPIRE* in order to set a tone suggesting that all characters could be on the chopping block in *JEDI*.

But Lucas wouldn't have it. With Kasdan back on board for *THE FORCE AWAKENS*, fans were once again riled that we might see Han meet his demise in order to spur the younger characters into action. • Kasdan also championed the idea of the final battle in *RETURN OF THE JEDI* taking place on a planet full of Wookiees. A budget-conscious Lucas, keen on that children's demographic and very aware of his massive merchandising rights, opted for something a fraction of the size of Wookiees. Er, no.




• The original title for *RETURN OF THE JEDI* was *REVENGE OF THE JEDI*. Lucas ultimately changed it because he felt a Jedi would never seek revenge, but he fell to the dark side. Fans know that this decision fell after the first round of teaser posters were printed and dismantled — now highly coveted items.

• Another idea credited to producing partner Howard Kasz was ending the first film with Luke walking off into the sunset like a gunslinger. But Lucas didn't want such a potentially depressing ending and opted for something more upbeat like... singing Wookiees.

• Just in case you were beginning to think that George Lucas only came up with the family-friendly ideas for his films, the winner for darkest potential story thread goes to him with this doozy. Lucas, in one story session, pitched the idea that after Luke defeats Vader at the end of *Jedi*, he puts on Vader's mask, assumes his position of authority over the Empire, and betrays his friends by moving to finally crush the rebellion. Dark, stuff! But as soon as Kasdan said he loved it, Lucas backed away and reminded himself that this film was for the children.

• Sci-Fi writer Leigh Brackett wrote a first draft for *EMPIRE* that was very different from the story that ended up on the screen. Lucas wasn't in love with her draft and, quite unfortunately, Brackett passed away before gaining the opportunity to give it another pass. The story opens on an ice planet where Han, Luke, and Leia are defending the Rebel base from attacking... snow creatures. Yup. Wumpas. Or at least the creatures that would become Wumpas in later drafts. In fact, they attack twice as they want the Rebels to leave their planet. Yoda is located on the Bog planet and is named Munch. Luke meets the spirit of his father on the Bee planet, who isn't Darth Vader (a plot point that wouldn't be worked out well into the development of *EMPIRE*). Han has a very powerful superfather he keeps trying to meet up with. He also gets exceptionally drunk during the Cloud City dawning scene. And Lando turns out to be a clone. It's a wild ride. But still, it seems there were a few seeds there that remained in the final product, but much of it was left behind.

This just goes to show that the creative process can be very messy and often has a lot of false starts. The stories that we are so familiar with could have gone many different ways and might have made for completely different experiences. It's fascinating to see how all these minds came together to produce these films. It will be very interesting to see if any of these ideas get carried forward into the new films, be it the new trilogy or any of the standalone features. But for now, we're just happy to see the gang back together! 



STAR WARS

HOLIDAY SPECIAL

Inside the Infamous STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL that George Lucas wishes would just go away.

HAPPY LIFE DAY!

By David Neilsen

Thirty-seven years ago, in the universe of television variety programs far, far away, CBS created two entire hours of STAR WARS-themed entertainment that defy explanation. The STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL aired on Friday, November 17, 1978, between 8:00 pm and 10:00 pm, replacing, for one night, episodes of uber-popular WONDER WOMAN and THE INCREDIBLE HULK. It featured Luke, Han, Leia, Chewie, R2-D2, C-3PO, Stormtroopers, the Millennium Falcon, Bibi Feltz (two years before EMPIRE!), most of the creatures from the Mos Eisley Cantina...

and it never aired again, was never released on VHS or DVD, and was left to rot in the dustbin of intergalactic history. Most of those involved assumed (desperately hoped) that it would vanish from the collective consciousness of mankind faster than Obi-wan vanished down the Rancor's throat.

For a time, they were correct. George Lucas waved his hand and muttered, "This is not the show you're looking for," and The STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL became an ethereal legend. Had it really happened? People who had watched the 1978 broadcast began to doubt their memories. Maybe, like Luke facing Vader on Dagobah, it had never been real.

This suited Lucas perfectly. The man famously despises The STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL. He was once quoted at a STAR WARS convention as reportedly saying, "If I had the time and a sledgehammer I would track down every copy of that show and smash it." Unfortunately for him, but fortunately for us, several die-hard fans recorded the 1978 broadcast on VHS, made copies, and meekly spread the special around. The more Lucas tightened his fist, the more copies slipped through his fingers.

Then along came the Internet and file sharing and lo! The STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL is available for free on YouTube in its entirety. The

Rebellion prevailed!

What is it about? Well... I'm glad you asked. Han Solo is trying to get Chewbacca home to the Wookiee planet Kashyyyk for Life Day, which is kind of like Christmas, but Imperial patrols are searching the area for rebel scum. Sounds exciting, doesn't it? And I'm sure it was, but rather than bother with depicting Han and Chewie's death-defying escapes, viewers spent all of their time hanging with Chewie's family. We watched his wife Malki, his father Jolly, and his son Lumpy (I did not make up those names) prepare for Life Day. Every now and then, they call one of the recognizable characters such as Luke or Leia to ask if they know where Han and Chewie might be.

And it's a variety show with holographic acrobats, Bea Arthur, Harvey Korman as three roles, and Princess Leia singing at the end.

There are many who side with Darth Lucas and feel the STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL is an abomination.



"If I had the time and a sledgehammer, I would track down every copy of that show and smash it." - George Lucas

on the scale of *Jar Jar Brinks*. To them I say: Bantins Poo-Do! There is genius within these two hours of televised entertainment, one simply must look beyond the awful and plot-line, awful and variety acts, awkward guest stars and awful and first 10 minutes spent watching these Wookiees greet at each other without subtitles.

I have an idea, and Lucas and Disney are free to take it or leave it. This year, audiences will rejoice at the release of *STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS*. It has been more than 30 years since *RETURN OF THE JEDI* was released, and seeing as how most of the main characters in that film are set to make an appearance in *FORCE AWAKENS*, it might be a good idea to reintroduce them to the world. And what better way than with *STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL*. EPISODE II?

As another Life Day approaches, we find Lumpy, now a solidly-built vision of Wookiee manliness, married to a lovely young Gungan maiden named Floppy. Grandfather Ich, is long-dead, but his mother Malla is still around to tell Lumpy's bride everything she's doing wrong (comic relief). With the Empire in tatters, as one worries about Chewbacca getting home. But dark forces are afoot. Lumpy's son, Harry, has a surprisingly high level of *audi-chlorox* in his blood, and a mysterious new neighbor (played by Frankie Muniz in drag) begins leading him astray. Possibly to awaken something...

Featuring a Gungu Du Solaid performance swinging through the trees of Kashyyik, songs from Imagine Dragons and Lyle Lovett, and guest appearances by Mike Myers as a Gansorraan Ganel, Kathy Bates as an Ewok queen, and Adam Sandler as a hilarious hair-care products salesman named Noob. The show ends with Anthony Daniels (C-3PO) singing "I Will Always Love You" with Kelly Clarkson.

You're welcome 🙄

The Five Most Wonderfully Awesome Things About the STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL



INTRODUCING... BOBA FETT

Two years before he would speak four words and take the *STAR WARS* nation by storm and 24 years before he would see his dad's head roll to a stop in front of him, Boba Fett first befriended then betrayed Luke, Leia, and company in a cartoon watched by Lumpy.

Even folks who don't understand the beauty of the special admit that this cartoon, called "The Faithful Wookiee," is a pretty dang cool.

EXISTENTIAL DROIDS

Near the end of the special, C-3PO says something to the effect of, "I wish I were alive and could feel emotion, so that I could enjoy Life Day to the fullest." That is some seriously deep thinking from ol' Goldenrod.

WOOKIEE ADULT ENTERTAINMENT

How do you fit a female lounge singer act into a sciencefiction variety special? You get dirty old Wookiee Ich to sit in a special "holochair" and enjoy a "very special" program. Enter Drobann Carroll as a holographic singer who says, "I am your fantasy. I am your experience. So experience me. I am your pleasure. So enjoy me." Nope. Nothing dirty about that at all.



MORE CANTINA MONSTERS!

The greatest scene in the original *STAR WARS* is, hands-down, the Cantina scene (I ran shot first). The *STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL* brought all it all back: the characters, the set, the music, everything. Then, to make it even better, they added Bea Arthur. Who sings. But forget about that, this scene is about seeing all your favorite monsters from the Mos Eisley Cantina interact... with Bea Arthur.

HARVEY KORMAN, HARVEY KORMAN, AND HARVEY KORMAN

In 1978, Korman graced the *STAR WARS HOLIDAY SPECIAL* not once, not twice, but three times. First as a deliciously funny, fourarmed spoof of Julia Child. A bit later, he shows up as an interactive-if-low-powered technical manual. Finally, he is a lonely barfly in the Mos Eisley Cantina who pours his drinks through a hole on the top of his head and is in love... with Bea Arthur.



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VINTAGE STAR WARS TOYS

Which ones did you play with? How many do you still have?





Candy coated creature Feature

By David Karger

KRAMFUS director Michael Dougherty introduces us to the horned, fiendish star of his new holiday horror-comedy and fills our stockings with behind-the-scenes candy.

It's the holiday season.

That time of year when shopping ramps up to a fever pitch, family dysfunction manifests, and children's thoughts turn to whether or not they've truly been naughty or nice. Michael Dougherty, the writer of two X-MEN movies and SUPERMAN RETURNS, and perhaps best known by genre fans as the director of the cult fest-ante TRUCK, R, TREAT, is quickly becoming the poster son of holiday horror.

"I always loved the holidays as a kid — Halloween and Christmas especially," Dougherty tells EW. "All the traditions and customs that we go through are really, in a weird way, sort of centered around making kids, or the kid made all of us, happy. Whether it's trick or treating and dressing up in costumes, or Santa Claus and toys, there's something about them that's centered around the magic of childhood. And with that comes an inherent belief in magic and creatures and monsters."

The story of a family that assembles for Christmas in suburban Ohio (Dougherty's hometown), only to have their brickering blanketed by a supernatural blizzard and a visit from the anti-Clauz, KRAMPUS reveals its taking the dark folklore totes of Santa's my-thical counterpart and its taking them for a contemporary setting.

"Christmas is candy-corned, and sugared, and commercialized, and you're expected to wear a big smile on your face all the time, but I always felt in any just that something isn't right about it," he says. "If you just spend 20 minutes doing research on the origins of Christmas, they're just as dark and as sinister and weird as Halloween, because Christmas started as a pagan holiday."

Dougherty deserves originality credit for bringing the Krampus to life. The monster movie genre is a tough one to capitalize on

with a fresh face these days, as pretty much every monster has been spoken for dozens of times over, from vampires, zombies, and werewolves to Bigfoot and The Kraken. While Krampus has always been lurking about the earliest folklore tales, Hollywood had yet to turn the character into a monstrous force to be reckoned with.

"I was always wanting to do a creepy Christmas film, but I couldn't find a monster as a figurehead," recalls Dougherty. "If you're doing research about the true origins of Christmas, all kinds of sort of lead you to Krampus. You find out that at the center of all the celebrations and myths there was this horned, demonic figure who came before Santa Claus. Krampus was the original mascot of the holiday season." Dougherty used to share classic Krampus postcard illustrations with friends via e-mail for laughs, and years later it finally dawned on him that he had his monster all along.

"WHO OR WHAT IS KRAMPUS?"

Unless you had a grandparent who would treat you on Christmas Eve with tales of naughty kids being absconded by Krampus in the Underworld, not much is known by the general public about the demonic-looking creature. Dougherty gives us the Krampus 101: "If you really go to all the old postcards, he's more of a mischief spirit than anything. He's always got a smile on his face. He's always having a good time. The postcard depictions have a really strong, wicked sense of humor. He's not just some cruel monster with an axe going around killing people. There's a sense of fun and purpose to the character, and that was really important for us to retain in the film."

Dougherty's Krampus enjoys the out-and-out nature of what he does. He likes to sit back and watch the screaming and chaos unfold with the help of his rogues' gallery of



monsters and helpers, a unique concept created for the film by Dougherty with his co-writers Todd Casey and Zach Shields. "He doesn't work alone," explains the filmmaker. "All in all, we have potentially nine or ten different monsters in this movie in addition to Krampus. It's something that we thought would be fun, taking the Santa Claus myth and really turning it on its head. Santa doesn't work alone — he's got elves and reindeer, and magical keys. We just thought it would be interesting if you really want to portray Krampus as the shadow of St. Nicholas, give Krampus a similar sort of arsenal."

Billed as a horror-comedy, Dougherty promises that KRAMPUS does not veer into especially dark territory. "The fact that it is a Christmas movie demands that you not take it too seriously from the start," he says. "This isn't THE SHINING."

(continued)

"We wanted to hearken back to '80s, Amblin-style genre films."

HYBRID EFFECTS: BALANCING PRACTICAL WITH CGI

As a child of the '80s and a big fan of Steven Spielberg's Amblin-produced movies, Dougherty has always been keen on incorporating as many old-school practical effects and puppets in his films as possible. But he explains that while the anti-CGI-overload backlash continues to gather steam among filmmakers, a "hybrid" approach can be just as effective and compelling.

"It's all about the look and the desired effect, and how to use it properly," says Dougherty. "I think we definitely have lost our way by focusing too much on digital at times. But digital can make a huge and helpful tool, and so I really enjoy the hybrid approach, where you get as much as you can in-camera with puppets and animatronics and everything else, but the beauty is that you can now, very easily and cheaply, go in and use a computer to enhance those puppets with some digital tinkery. ... So by doing that, there's that perfect middle ground of charm where it's clearly a puppet, but it's doing things that a puppet shouldn't be able to do, and there's a texture that you don't get if you use a digital creature."

KRAMPUS was shot in New Zealand in order to employ Weta Workshop, the effects house used for all of Peter Jackson's Middle-earth movies. The Krampus special effects and prop company hired in Münster made all of the physical puppets and did

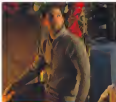
all the prosthetic pushing, including digital set extensions, atmospheric effects, removing rods and wires and even puppets from shots, and creating some digital characters that "are made to feel practical."

THE BEST SPECIAL EFFECT A PERFECT CAST

Of course, no amount of digital magic can compensate for a lackluster story or even worse, poorly cast actors. KRAMPUS boasts the likes of Tom Collette, Adam Scott, Allison Janney, David Koechner, Conchita Ferriz, Stefania LaVie Owen, Krista Stadler, and Emjay Anthony, who amount to a wonderful troupe of actors who can capably walk that fine line between comedy and drama. "The first 15 minutes [of the film] is straight-up Christmas family dramedy, and then things start to shift," explains Dougherty. "It was

important to find actors who—if it was were strictly a Christmas family dramedy—you would buy, and believe. ... I still slap myself every now and then when I step back and look at the cast that we assembled. I think they got the joke. They knew that the intention of the film was not dark or sinister, but that we wanted to harken back to '80s Amblin-style gothic films. I sort of missed the fact that tone went away. There was a whole era where you had GUEMLINS, POLTERGEIST, AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON, NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET, THE THING, and they were all genre films that weren't afraid to dance around a different genre. They were all mashups to a certain degree, and they all had this perfect balance of horror and humor and heart. [The KRAMPUS cast] all grew up on these movies, and I think we all sort of collectively missed them to a certain extent. Now it was our turn to make one, and hopefully re-introduce this tone and genre to a new generation." 

KRAMPUS is in theaters everywhere December 4. Follow @Bill_Be_Dougherty on Twitter.



ABOVE LEFT: Adam Scott hears a bump in the night, and it ain't St. Nick. LEFT: Emjay Anthony meets the fearsome Krampus. RIGHT: Here David Koechner, Tom Collette, Emjay Anthony, and Allison Janney all been naughty?



While the movie KRAMPUS focuses on a single family's dance with the yuletide devil, Michael Dougherty has teamed with a number of clever writers to expand his winter's tale in comic book form. "This small town in Ohio gets swallowed by a very uncouthy Chthonian beast, the comic book stories focus on all the other characters in that town [that Krampus visits]. In many ways, structurally, it's closer to TRICK 'R TREAT in that it's an anthology [with] characters and moments that cross-over with each other."

In October, Dougherty also unleashed the TRICK 'R TREAT DAYS OF THE DEAD comic to tide fans over. "TRICK 'R TREAT is my original baby," he says. "Sam is very, very near and dear to my heart and I badly want to do the sequel. ... Now that KRAMPUS is unleashed, the hope is to now turn all the attention and focus on to TRICK 'R TREAT 2."



COMEDY, KRAMPUS STYLE

A Quality Q&A with David Koechner

By Gerry Goffe

David Koechner is one of the funniest scene-stealers working today. With roles this year in *KRAMPUS: SCOUTS GUIDE TO THE ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE*, and other genre films, the character actor perhaps best known for the *ANCHORMAN* movies is quickly becoming the go-to guy for horror-comedy. He's also a married man with five kids, so he definitely knows a thing or two about the everyday horror-comedy of the holiday season.

Famous Monsters: First off, did you even know what/who/why a Krampus is? How did this fun project get started for you?

David Koechner: To answer your first question, which is kind of a three-parter: no, no, and no. I didn't know who, what, or where a Krampus is or was. And then I went in and met with the director, Michael Dougherty, and he gave me a great lesson on him. He showed me the artwork, and he showed me the sketchbook, and he showed me the mock-ups he had so far for the practical special effects. He told me a lot about the legend. It was a great immersion right away when we first met, so that was really cool. And I could clearly see Michael's passion for it. I keep saying it's a holiday horror with humor and heart. Those are the four H's.

FM: It sounds wonderful. When and where did you guys shoot this?

DK: Oh yeah. We shot it in March, April, and part of May in New Zealand, because we used Weta Workshop and they use practical special effects, some digital, but most of it practical. So we were down there with the Peter Jackson people.

FM: It must be nice for you as an actor to be able to act in front of something tangible.

DK: Oh yeah. You're not looking at a green screen, you're playing with real toys... There are puppets who have to work these huge monsters, and that's what to me was astonishing. How much work they go through to rig some of these monsters. And

because we found the Workshop and some some of the creatives in the early stages, that was really fun to see them come to life. From framework all the way through completed monster.



FM: It's putting yourself in the holiday mindset pretty easy when you're walking on set and you have Christmas trees, ugly sweaters, decorations, and the like?

DK: Yeah, we all have that bell that rings in our head once you see a Christmas tree. Once you see things wrapped up. There's the joy — and the dread — of the holiday season.

FM: Were the holidays a magical thing for you growing up?

DK: Probably less magical, because when I was a kid I had to help set up the whole house and put up the lights. Because I was from a small town, we'd go out and cheap

down a tree, and so it was a lot of work. So, less magical. But then, as you get that excitement about waking up the next day and seeing what you get on Christmas morning!

FM: You're starting to become a comedy-horror go-to these days. Would you say you're kind of a male Scream Queen?

DK: I know! Let's see. I've done *FINAL DESTINATION 5*, I did *SNAKES ON A PLANE*, which you could say is kind of a thriller, then *PIRANHA 3DD* — Oscar-worthy — and then *SCOUTS* and *KRAMPUS*, so yeah, I think those are all shot as genre and sub-genre films, right? *CHEAP THRILLS* is definitely a thriller. I didn't think there were any laughs in *CHEAP THRILLS* until I saw it with an audience. I was shocked! It's certainly not a comedy at all. It's nice that people can slowly start recognizing that I can do more than just comedies. It'd be nice if they don't know what I might be up to the next time they see me in a picture.

FM: Do you seek out genre films and similar types of projects?

DK: I'm always developing projects. I'm one of those fortunate guys who works all the time. If I'm available when something comes up, I'll probably do it. The funny thing is I just saw a poster for *HILL AND BACK* today, and I ran that too. It's an animated feature. Nick Snodgrass is the lead voice. It's got an amazing cast. I will have at least two films, maybe three, playing at the same time. I have had two films open on the same day. I think it was *BARNYARD* and *SNAKES ON A PLANE*, and then the next week was *TALLADega NIGHTS*, which isn't too bad.

FM: You might want to be courteous and make some room for some other people.

DK: (laughs) Remember, I have seven months to feed! @j

Follow David Koechner on Twitter @DavidKoechner

GREG NICOTERO:



RELENTLESS ATTENTION TO DETAIL

As THE WALKING DEAD takes a mid-season break, FM turns the spotlight on the man who minds the zombie store.

By Ed Blair

Greg Nicotero is one of the driving forces that has made *THE WALKING DEAD* a worldwide phenomenon. The accomplished director, producer, and makeup FX artist was a crucial part of *EVIL DEAD 2*'s monster mayhem. He created the incredibly hilarious animated buffalo in *DANCES WITH WOLVES*. He studied under Tom Savini and George Romero, and has a resume featuring some of Hollywood's biggest hits and FX heavyweights. He's a third of the powerhouse team at KNB EFX, one of film and TV's most sought-after houses of onscreen practical miracles. And now, he is pushing practical effects to new heights with his work on *THE WALKING DEAD*.

"Relentless. It's going to be relentless." These are Nicotero's opening thoughts when talking about what's in store for our heroes throughout Season 6 of *THE WALKING DEAD*. "What we're going to put them through, it's just not going to stop." It's the human characters that drive the story and often create moments for scares. For more evil, than anything an army of walkers can induce. But this season is going to continue to provide new opportunities. "Every other season has been about surviving," says Nicotero. "With Alexandria, for the first time, the



group is thinking about living, about a future. It can be a home. That's why Rick does what he does in Season 5." But don't let the small setting and potential for gore make you into thinking it'll be a cakewalk for our group. "The characters are all dealing with things. We've got Morgan who has fully embraced the idea that life is precious. He believes that any body can be brought back, redeemed. And this is going to put him at odds with Rick." While night-typed on the set, Nicotero promises that the second half of Season 6 will up the ante in terms of intensity from what we've seen in previous seasons. "Relentless." And he laughs.

Growing up in Pittsburgh in the '60s and early '70s, Nicotero had the benefit of the monster renaissance that was happening all across the country. From the pages of *FM* to the explosion of local horror hosts, like his very own hometown sensation "Charly Billy" Cardillo. But while monsters were invading print and screens both big and small, Nicotero's love affair with monsters was born of something quite different. His father's fondness of technology. "My dad was a gadget guy," he begins. "We had one of the very first VCRs. It was real-4-mel-

And the first two movies I recorded off of the TV were *HORROR OF DRACULA* and *THE TIME MACHINE*. I watched them over and over. Christopher Lee as Dracula, I loved it." But watching the movies wasn't enough for the future monster magician.

After a trip to the local comic shop Edie's (see Nicotero's Famous Monster Kid profile on page 4) where he discovered his first *FM*, as well as spending countless hours creating Auron models, Nicotero's artistic talents and his love of monsters really began to come together. "I had a drawing pad with me whenever I would watch TV. I would draw the monsters on the screen, or my versions of them. Sometimes I would draw some of Basil Gogos' *FM* covers. I was always drawing, always making monsters." And while free time isn't always in abundance these days, he's made a point to not only draw, but to pass the skill along to his children. "We do this thing where we'll put five minutes on the clock and pick a topic, like vampire bats, and then we have to draw it before time runs out. When the buzzer goes off we all hold up our pads to see what we've done. I don't get to draw as much as I'd like, but it's nice to be able to share that with my kids."

Interestingly, the opportunity to make monsters almost passed Nicotero by. Despite the fact that he had a friendly relationship with local hero George Romero thanks to Nicotero's uncle Sam, who had been an actor in Romero's *THE CRAZIES*, Nicotero had missed a chance to work with Savini on *CREEPSHOW* and had decided to go to college as a pre-med major. "I always thought you had to be in L.A. to make movies. It didn't occur to me that I could actually do it professionally." But unlike in Dante's *INFERNO*, hope had not been abandoned.

"I was just about to go to college. I was 17. I got an offer to work on *DAY OF THE DEAD* with Savini. I made a decision that I would not let this opportunity pass me by again. I was totally committed. I finally realized that I didn't have to be in L.A. to do this. Savini was [in Pittsburgh] making movies [Romero] was here doing it. I could have gone back to college and gotten my degree. But right there I made my decision." It was on *DAY OF THE DEAD* that Nicotero would also get his first opportunity to work with Howard Berger and Robert Kurtzman, his future business and creative partners at KNB. The dynasty was born.

(Continued)

Fast forward three decades, one cross-country trip to L.A., and dozens of films ranging from *ARMY OF DARKNESS* and *FROM DUSK TIL DAWN* to *SIN CITY* and *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA*, and we find a man leading a revolution. Nicotero has worked with Frank Darabont, John Carpenter, Quentin Tarantino and Steven Spielberg. But today, he stands at the helm of one of Hollywood's biggest shops: the zombie-ruled zone-of-war that is *THE WALKING DEAD*. Not simply the show's FX guru, he also serves as a director and executive producer on the show, giving him an opportunity held by very few in Hollywood: "I have a voice," he says. "I remember when I was at a screening of *HALLOWEEN 5*. After the movie I was talking with the director about a scene. I suggested we change the camera angle to sell the effect a little more. When I was walking away he said, 'He's just the effects guy.' I never forgot that. But now I have a voice."

Fortunately for us, his voice has come through loud and clear when it comes to many of the show's more monstrous elements. Aside from tight writing and carefully constructed characters put in a compelling world, the show has become famous for its unique undead subgenres. In addition to the shambling masses of mobile rotting flesh, the world of *THE WALKING DEAD* is populated by walkers that seem to have succumbed to their physical limitations in unique and haunting ways, giving depth and almost humanizing these seemingly tasteless

killing machines. Take for example in Season 2 when Daryl and Andrea are walking through a forest and come across a "live" walker hanging by a noose from a tree. With this simple image we saw past the horrifying exterior and realized that this was once a person who made the terrible decision to take their own life, completely unaware they had already been infected and were destined to be brought back in their nightmare form, dangling helplessly from a noose in the middle of a forest. It's a powerful image that adds a level of tragedy to the world that simple dialogue could never convey.

Nicotero is eager to discuss how these creatures are created. "The Bicycle Girl was straight out of the book. But others, like the Well Walker, were a result of the writing team visiting the shop and seeing what we were working on. Other times, I'll see the script and make a suggestion. For instance, there was this gag [the term used to refer to the various standard walkers and situations they find themselves in] where there was a walker that was supposed to be pushed by a van. But I suggested we put her under the van as the wheel would and wrap her around the axle. So we had a cameraman and shoved her in there. Then we started adding body parts, a leg here. Another I turned out great." More importantly, Nicotero points out, the walkers are never made just as exercises in creativity. "They have to make sense. They have to fit the story. In [the first episode of Season 6], the walker that attacks Carter in the woods, if you stop on the wide shot you'll

see that the walker's entrails are wrapped around a tree. That's the reason the walker isn't with the herd. We did it just place it there for a jump scare."

But despite his savvy for practical effects, he's not afraid to incorporate CGI into his work. "CGI just has to have a practical base. We use CG when it makes sense, for instance, when we do blood hits. We used to do them practically, but when you've only got eight days to shoot an episode it just didn't work. If we were shooting a feature we could do all the blood practically." One of his favorite pieces of digital trickery involves one of *WALKING DEAD*'s most talked-about and emotional death scenes. "When we found Hershel's still-moving head, the head was so realistic, but we actually filmed [actor Scott Wilson's] eyes and then digitally composited them onto the head. So when you're looking at that head you're seeing real eyes." Not to worry, though: Nicotero is keenly aware of the power of practical effects and the shift we've seen recently back towards them, and that the hope for the future is not lost. "I don't know if I'd call it a renaissance. But I think what we're seeing is all the people who grew up loving the practical effects of the '70s are now in places where they're making those decisions, and they want to use practical effects. I've had times when 16-year-old kids are coming up to me because of the show and saying they want to get into doing practical effects. That's awesome." Never underestimate the power of a well-built monster. 



For more on Greg, visit keefegroup.com. *THE WALKING DEAD* returns to ABC in Spring 2016 and Greg Nicotero's handiwork can be seen in Quentin Tarantino's new film *THE HATEFUL EIGHT*.

LEFT: Nicotero poses with *Zombie King*/mentor George A. Romero.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Season 6 of *THE WALKING DEAD* was nothing short of relentless for our heroes. (Note: Nicotero likes to sport FM's Shock Monster on set!)



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FLASH GORDON GLORY

THE STAR OF FLASH GORDON SHARES SET STORIES AND HIS 20/20 HINDSIGHT OF THE BIG-BUOGET, 1980 CULT FAVORITE ON THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS RELEASE.

By David Weiner

STAR WARS may have changed the landscape of big-budget Sci-Fi in 1977, but when FLASH GORDON arrived in theaters three years later in December of 1980, it was truly a anomaly. A polarizing film to this day, in terms of true-fan fervor vs. flop perceptions, the film almost defied categorization at the time of its release with its pop-art aesthetics, brightly colored sets and costumes, borderline kink, and rockin' soundtrack by Queen—a radical choice in its rejection of a classical or symphonic score.

Reflecting on the film that made him a star more than three decades ago, Sam J. Jones gets candid with EW about his unique central perspective: "It's very hard for me to be objective," he says of the movie he labored on more than three decades ago. "I'm very difficult on myself. I guess to summarize it in a nutshell, I was pretty proud of the work I did, considering what we had to deal with at the time on a very, very fast pace."

It's the stuff of buff and fantastic fun. FLASH GORDON follows the title character, a quarterback for the New York Jets, and his companions Dale Arden (played by Melody Anderson) and Dr. Hans Zarkov (played by Topol) as they blast off to the distant world of Mongo to confront the inviolent Emperor Ming the Merciless (played by Max von Sydow) before he annihilates Earth on a whim. Once there, they team up with the kingdom's antagonist-siding rulers, Prince Barin (a pre-07 Timothy Dalton) and Prince Vultan (played by Peter Onorati), to take down a Ming. Based on the comic adventure strip created by Alex Raymond that was first published in 1934 for King Features Syndicate, FLASH GORDON was designed to be an answer to the already popular BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY. The concept took off like a rocket, and within two years the character was on the silver screen starring Orson Welles and former TARZAN star

Buster Crabbe as the intrepid Flash for a number of cliffhanger serials. The title also found its way to television in the '50s and the late '70s as a Filmation animated series (and then in the early '80s by Filmation as a one-time TV movie). The character also appeared in the mid-'60s in the animated DEFENDERS OF THE EARTH, and was rebooted for live-action with a short-lived Syfy show in the '90s (when the network was still spelled Sci-Fi).

CASTING FROM THE DATING GAME

"[Producer] Dino De Laurentiis hired me because he saw the character [in me], he saw the similarities with me and Buster Crabbe, the original Flash," says Jones. "If you take a photo of Buster Crabbe at the age of 25 years old, and you take a photo of me at the age of 25, we really look like brothers. So I know the similarities of the physical look, casting-wise, was there. That had something to do with it."

Before FLASH, the world saw Jones briefly in Blake Edwards' romantic comedy 10 with Daphne Moore and Bo Derek, and he had small roles in the CBS pilot CO-ED FEVER and ABC's STUNTS UNLIMITED. But it was a magnetic appearance on a late-night spoof of THE DATING GAME that caught the eye of none other than Dino's mother-in-law. Watching the 6-7-200-pound, former Marine Corps football player positioned as "the perfect catch" prompted her to call her son and proclaim, "Hey! Your Flash Gordon is on THE DATING GAME!" The rest is history. "This was an eight or nine-month auditioning process," explains Jones. "I really didn't get the script until I was told by Dino, 'Okay, you got the part.' Upon his first read of HANUMAN '66 TV writer Lorenzo Semple, Jr.'s screenplay, Jones recalls, "I looked at it and thought 'This is going to be a lot of fun. Wow!'"

Fun, odd, camp, excitement. Flash Gordon is a bit more on certain things, but [the script is] very camp, and [even more so].

"JUST SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE RIDE, AND TRY NOT TO CONDUCT BRAIN SURGERY ON IT."





ABOVE: Alex Raymond's FLASH GORDON comic strip started it all in 1934. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Buster Crabbe first brought Flash to life opposite Charles Middleton's Ming. **RIGHT:** Can Sam J. Jones and Melody Anderson save the world?

just an unpredictable adventure." I had high expectations."

Of course, FLASH GORDON was a pop-culture phenomenon decades before Jones was born, and its reach and influence combined with the generation that grew up with the character. It's well known that George Lucas first wanted to make his own adaptation of FLASH for the big screen, and "fell back" on his STAR WARS tale only after he was unable to secure the rights to the character. "As a kid I would collect FLASH GORDON comic books, Superman, Batman," recalls Jones. "When I was put through the auditioning process, I started doing a little bit of research and I said, 'Hey, this guy is kinda cool.' I didn't realize at the time that he was one of the very few superheroes who does not have superpowers. Basically, he had to rely on his athleticism and his wit. I thought, 'Okay, this gives it a different twist and a different dynamic.' And I knew at the time, 25 years old, I couldn't be anybody else other than who I am, so I also gave the part pieces of me."

A BIG-BUDGET SHOOT WITH A LANGUAGE BARRIER

Once the approximately five-month production began filming at Shepperton and Elstree Studios in England, Jones put his head down and performed like a heavy workhorse. "This project was much bigger than me," he says. "I could not be distracted by anything. I had to focus on my job at hand, and my job at hand was to study my scenes the night before, be completely prepared, get plenty of rest, and show up to work on time and add value to what the directors and producers were doing." In fact, disorienting the production as an unknown was so demanding that Jones felt like he couldn't fully enjoy the experience. "I was thrown from a scene to a rehearsal to a suit to a blocking rehearsal to rehearsing starts," he says. "Even when I was at the studio, I was at home or in the hotel working out. I was training. I was studying, learning how to use a bulldozer with a bulldozer armist, everything. It just never stopped for me. So now, as I sit back in some of these FLASH GORDON



screenings that I visit, and I've only seen a few. I'm discovering things for the first time and it's quite remarkable."

The FLASH crew was a potent mixture of different cultures, with the local British blending with a number of Italian craftsmen imported by producer Dino Zotti of whom spoke little or no English. "Melody and I were the only two Americans," says Jones. "And we didn't speak Italian, so there was a lot of eye contact and body language." The shooting script was tight and the production schedule even tighter, so there was no time to expand and experiment with successive takes. Still, says Jones, "There was room for subtleties. I remember especially the intimate scene with Ornella (Pinto, who played the ailing Princess Aura), and the funny stuff with Melody, we were given freedom. But remember, this was a huge budget in the time. Thirty-five million dollars in 1979 could be equivalent of \$300 million nowadays. Michael Hodges, our director, was very good considering what he had to work with. He came in at the last second. Nicolas Roeg was the hired director who spent probably well over a year in development and in pre-production. He left three weeks before filming, and Michael Hodges came in, so Michael's plate was very, very full. As actors, we really had to press in and really trust Michael since this was sort of a brand new baby for him."

Every film production has its unknowns



challenges, and Jones points out that was paid because a doctor to be reckoned with on the FLASH set. "Everything was visually so beautiful with the reds and the golds and the suits, a lot of that were points. The floors and the walls were fresh paint [from] days or weeks earlier. So every time I'm wearing a white shirt, the T-shirt that says FLASH, and I'm rolling around on the floor or on the rotating disc, we're talking about

Okay, now my shirt has silver paint on it, now it's got red paint! So yeah, it could be problematic." he says with a laugh. Jones had a lot of appreciation for his mixed counterparts on the film, as the actors who pining of the Hawkmen had to endure long hours in uncomfortable harnesses. "My god, they had them up in the air for hours," recalls Jones. "If you know anything about that, your body is under tremendous pressure to be hanging. I guess it would be okay if you were hanging head straight up and feet straight down, but in that prone position like that, I think it takes a lot of out you. They couldn't keep bringing them up there and bringing them down there, up and down, up and down, because they had to keep getting the shots. But they were all troops." One particular moment to look for in the film



LEFT: Anderson and the Hawkmen dangle on wires for a shot. **MIDDLE:** Brian Blessed as Prince Wilton. **ABOVE:** A pre-007 Timothy Dalton played Prince Sorin.

is how Jones climbs the rope when he's on Prince Datto's planet of Auburna. If it seems the simplest bit off it's because of a cinematic trick. "I had to climb the rope over and over and over again," he recalls. "I don't care if you're a professional rope climber; after the 15th time there's nothing left. You have a complete muscle failure. But you can't just say, 'Okay, guys, let's take a break now' with 200 people right there in front of you. No, you gotta go! So I think it was Michael, the director—when I couldn't climb the rope anymore to make it look smooth, he said, 'Okay, Sam, just come down the rope and we'll roll the film in reverse.' And I said 'Man, that's really cool, let's do that!' So it worked."

Flash's memorable fight against Dalton's Prince Sorin on the Hawkmen's terriblest of death was also quite a challenge. "Yes, it was a little bit more than 10 feet [above the ground], and surrounding the disc at the bottom, instead of pads or air bags or big

pieces of foam, the English would stack gigantic boxes and they would offset the stacks," explains Jones. "I thought to myself, 'Are you kidding me?'" I knew I was going to fall a lot because we had to upsize on the edge of the disc. Every time it tilted I knew we'd be falling off. And the stuntman said, 'Trust me, Sorin, we've been doing this for years.' And sure enough, the first time I fell into the boxes, just for a split second you thought it felt sharp, and then your body molded into these pieces of cardboard and it would work out perfect." He adds, "Not getting hit in the face, in the eye, with the bullwhip during the rotating disc fight scene with Timothy was kind of cool; a lot of control there. But sometimes we did wreck each other."

MORE FLASH: BACK ON THE ROCKET CYCLE

When off was said and done and Jones watched the final cut of *FLASH GORDON*, he wasn't entirely sure what to make of it. "I sat for the first time watching it, thinking, 'Wait a minute... am I supposed to laugh at that, or are they being serious?' Is it camp? You know... when you look at the special effects you go, 'Well that's kind of funny, but are they trying to be funny, or is that the best that they can do with special effects?' And then you realize you can sit there and dissect it and you can brainstorm as much as you want, when in fact all the viewer has to do is just sit back and have a good time. Visually, it's exceptional. It's beautiful with the production quality and the costumes and the sets and all of that. So that's my



LEFT: The terriblest fight and other action sequences were meticulously storyboarded. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** Mark Wahlberg rides the Rocket Cycle with Jones in the comedy *TED*.

recommendation for anybody. Just sit back and enjoy the ride, and try not to conduct brain surgery on it.

Not one but a number of sequels were originally planned for FLASH GORDON, and Jones confirms, "If I'm not mistaken, there was a six-picture deal." But tepid domestic box-office ultimately put the brakes on the planned follow-ups. "America was the only country that didn't really exceed expectations: it was not a big box-office smash in America. But in every other country, it was." Jones then muses about the open-ended possibility of another chance at his "You know how sequels go. Sometimes it's a year later, sometimes three, sometimes 20." Of course, Jones got the opportunity to return to the character decades later in a way that he never expected: playing himself, as well as Flash, in the 2012 summer sleeper-hit comedy TED. "Yeah, wasn't that funny?" chuckles Jones on or his extended cameo in which he plays a drug-binging, brawling version of himself. "Thank god for Seth McFarlane. This is something you can't make up. When he was eight years old he saw FLASH GORDON, and when he called us there a couple years ago he said, 'Sam, you and the movie FLASH GORDON changed my life. When I saw you I knew that I wanted to be a producer, create a person in life,' and he did! He said, 'I'm doing this movie TED and it has a really strong FLASH GORDON theme to it and I really want to bring you on board.' And here he is now with his FAMILY GUY, AMERICAN DAD, CLEVELAND SHOW franchise, and now he has the TED franchise. TED 2 came out this past summer."

Despite a major marketing push at the time of its release, 1980's FLASH GORDON was never merchandised in a way that spoiled-in-comparison STAR WARS kids had hoped or expected. "You can practically count on one hand how many toys were manufactured. Which is why, Bl'atung Pow! Toys & Collectibles co-founder Jason Lewis

embarked on creating the FLASH action figures he wanted but never had, in both 7" and 3 1/4" versions. "Oh man, it's incredible! I think it's a horror," says Jones of holding his likeness in the palm of his hand. "And the first love of it. The knee [is] got a Bl'atung Pow! FLASH figure signed at this summer's Comic-Con] were huge!"

Despite a busy, post-FLASH career that included work in film and television, the actor ultimately side-stepped the entertainment industry to run a private security company that he says includes protecting individuals from "kidnappings and assassinations." As FLASH has only grown in cult status over the years (Jones is now the subject of a brand-new documentary, LIFE AFTER FLASH), he has enthusiastically embraced the fact that he's most often associated with his one-time turn as Flash. "The way its evolved, it is what it is, and I'm proud of this," he states. "I don't understand actors that are trying to walk away from that so-called image. We owe it to the fans because they put the money to walk into the theater and pay the money for the ticket. We owe it to the fans who watch us on television because they take the time to do it. They could be watching something else but they decided to engage and watch us. So we owe it to them, to give back to them. These Comic-Con conventions, these personal appearances, the fact that I've decided to now play/do a spoof of me and Flash Gordon in the TED franchise, well that's all fun and that's all fine, and I enjoy it. And look what's happened: with the TED franchise, it opened up a whole new age demographic where the fans who did not see FLASH GORDON in the past, because they saw TED, now they're also watching FLASH GORDON. It's a win-win situation for everybody."

Follow Sam J. Jones on Twitter, @RealSamJones

THE SATURDAY MORNING CARTOON



In fall of 1975, a year before FLASH GORDON exploded on the big screen, kids were treated to new adventures of the 1930s hero on Saturday mornings with Filmation's stunning animated series, a loyal homage to the original strip. Initially meant to be a made-for-TV movie (which aired once on primetime in 1982), the show was produced in part to capitalize on the STAR WARS craze and displayed impressive space battles and action sequences thanks to rotoscoping techniques. Alex Ross remembers, "The Filmation series was extraordinary in terms of its contrast to everything else on kids' TV for Saturday mornings. It was cinematic-looking, building off what was drawn some 50 years before."





ALEX ROSS AND JASON LENZI SAVIORS OF FLASH GORDON

Celebrated comic book artist Alex Ross and Riff Bang Pow! toys and collectibles co-founder Jason Lenzi defend FLASH GORDON in a world defined by the long shadow of STAR WARS.

Alex Ross and Jason Lenzi are the ultimate FLASH GORDON fans. Each has turned his love for the 1980 film into an opportunity to integrate it into his work in order to share their passion with the masses. Ross with his paintings and comic book art and even his personal logo. Lenzi with his interpretation of long-coveted action figures and merchandise that were never produced during FLASH GORDON's theatrical run. As children of the '70s and early '80s, both Ross and Lenzi's enthusiasm is palpable, and their energy lent itself to a spirited two-hour discussion with EW about FLASH and the myths surrounding it. Here are some highlights.

A BRIGHT SPOT AFTER EMPIRE

ALEX ROSS: [With the release of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK in 1980], there was this sense of someone that you applied now to the STAR WARS era and said, "As awesome as that is, there is something something about the seriousness of EMPIRE and a sense of hopelessness. With FLASH GORDON, there's something about that satisfaction [of seeing your heroes win]. ... [Producer] Dino De Laurentiis must have been thinking, "We've got a comic strip, we need to be bright and fun and colorful. Let's just put that onscreen, and make all the costumes out of complicated bead work, and have it look like a disco nightmare." But that led to this thing that was, in its own way, intellectually honest and pure.

JASON LENZI: [EMPIRE] was a very, very anemic thing for me and I went into a depression. I was mortified at what they did to my hero [Han Solo]. ... Months

later, I'm sitting in a movie theater, and I saw the FLASH GORDON trailer [with the card that said "Soundtrack by Queen"]. I was 10, and my jaw dropped. It literally raised me out of my funk. I had a new hero. ... This movie comes out, and I knew it was different. I loved it from the get go. I think I saw it four or five times in the theater.

THEIR FLASH OBSESSION

JASON: We're obsessed in different ways. I left the movie and I'm looking for any merchandise I could find. Because Alex has this inherent, genius talent to draw — I can't draw a stick figure to this day — he did his own comic book adaptation of the film!

ALEX: I did 100 pages of hand-drawn comics adapting the entire movie [at 11 years old]. I finished it, and then a year or so later, as my art style was rapidly improving, I thought that it wasn't so my standards and I was embarrassed for it. Out of whatever kind of emotional reaction that I normally never did with anything else I worked on as a kid, I threw it out. ... It was in color, it took me a year to complete it. That's obsession.

WATCHING FLASH: KID VS. ADULT

ALEX: FLASH GORDON works if you suspend critical thinking. We were of an age that lit us just right because we had entered our mid-to-late teens yet. That's the big distinction, because once you hit your teens when you become more cynical, and you're judging your pop groups by a sort of very aggressive criteria, you would look at this and go,

"Oh, what is that?" Whereas the kids we were would embrace it for its purity.

They made it mature on the pop-art level that puts it as a more kindred spirit to other films that came from the '70s like THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW.

JASON: FLASH GORDON had some fancy moments. ... When I saw Omella Malik, I knew that I was ugly, and that I could probably score with her [laughs]. There's a line when Ming turns his ring on Dale and she's essentially in ecstasy. Ming says to Klytus, "Have you ever seen such response?" And Klytus says, "No I haven't." She even avows your daughter." Which means Ming has used the ring on his daughter! That's the kind of thing where you knew you were seeing something as a kid, but it clearly went over your head. ... When rewatching I noticed a little bit of the link, and the layers did start to peel back and become a little more obvious here and there. But I never lost affection for it. It only grew.

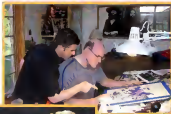
PITFALLS OF FOLLOWING STAR WARS

ALEX: STAR WARS is something that George Lucas did when he couldn't work out the deal with King Features for the rights to FLASH GORDON, and effectively that clarity [STAR WARS would be built] is a realization of those original Alex Ross mind designs, or more like what impacted what he felt like as a kid watching the Bette Midler serials. He convinced an interpretation of that into a popular movie some 40 years ago that was entirely successful — and it is FLASH GORDON. So [later] when you actually get the real become of FLASH GORDON done by these other hands that

didn't have the vision that Lucas had FLASH GORDON unfortunately becomes the loser here

JASON, Like everyone else, we knew there was a world before STAR WARS. And it's a little foggy, and a little gray, and a little vague sometimes. ... STAR WARS came out and twisted my neck. Like everybody else's, and became our life. FLASH GORDON is like a secret handshake. The whole world did not love this movie and does not 35 years later. It has caught on, but it's not everyone's cup of tea. People just put it by the wayside, and it became this cult thing. I don't think it'll ever be STAR WARS. It's never going to happen. But it is getting an affection now, 35 years later. A lot of it has to do with TED and other things, but maybe people are finally catching on to just how brilliant this thing is. 

For more on the work of Alex Ross, head to alexrossart.com. For more with Jason Lenz, visit hfbangson.com or interact on Twitter @BBPLenz



ABOVE: Lenz to Ross: "You pointed outside the line!" **LEFT:** Lenz with Anderson and Jones at Comic-Con. **FAR LEFT:** Flash sketches from THE DYNAMITE ART OF ALEX ROSS. **BELOW:** The magnificent, brand-new FLASH 35th anniversary painting by Ross.



NEW FLASH GORDON TOYS

When it came to FLASH GORDON toys and merchandise tie-ins, the disappointment Bif Bang Pow co-founder Jason Lenzi experienced in 1990 may have sealed the day he learned that his hero's voice was dubbed for large portions of the movie. As an adult, Jason set out to right that wrong, and teamed up with Alex Rose as Art Director to create the ultimate FLASH GORDON action figures and more. The first toys started with 6" figures, and just recently he introduced smaller figures to capitalize on the nostalgia for Kenner-sized 3 3/4" STAR WARS figures.

Lenzi tells FM, "The thing that I would've wanted 35 years ago walking into the toy store after seeing the movie would've been 3 3/4" FLASH GORDON figures to go with all my other action figures. The idea [now] is to try to give the universe more of what it never got, and hopefully get up to 20-25 characters. If people show up and want this stuff, we will be able to make more.

Figures and more available at orbangopow.com and entertainmentearth.com



FLASH GORDON TOY HALL OF SHAME

Jason Lenzi shares select images from his proud personal collection of the limited amount of movie tie-in merchandise created in support of 1980's FLASH GORDON, including a comic-book adaptation, a puffy glitter sticker set, a Hawkman Halloween costume, and an unsettling Flash mask. Yikes.



MAX VON SYDOW
MING THE MERCILESS!VINTAGE
MONSTERS

The Swedish-born actor talks about his role as Ming in *FLASH GORDON* and also about a previous onscreen brush with evil!

FM: What do you think of the film?
VON SYDOW: I saw it with an audience, and the audience reacted wonderfully to it. It's a true cartoon. I personally think it's a fun picture.

FM: Did you ever see the original Buster Crabbe *FLASH GORDON*?

VON SYDOW: Only part of it, and not until I was already in production on the new film. When I was a boy, I read the cartoon, though not steadily. Flash Gordon was not one of my favorite comic strip heroes. And I didn't know about the films in those days. I don't even know if they were shown in Sweden.

FM: What do you think of the Buster Crabbe series?

VON SYDOW: I thought they were extremely funny.

FM: What about Burt J. Jones, who plays Flash? Do you think he's a good actor?

VON SYDOW: I think he's got the film, and I like him very much. Personally, Sam is a very nice man.

FM: You have starred in many great films including *THE SEVENTH SEAL*, and *THE EXORCIST*. What attracted you to *FLASH GORDON*, and to Ming?

VON SYDOW: Merely I did it for fun. This was sheer fantasy, different from what I've done before. That attracted me. The way the part was written in the script suggested that I'd have a great deal of fun. And villains are always dreadfully more satisfying to play than the good guys.

FM: Did you read a great deal of SF in your childhood?

VON SYDOW: I read some. Mostly though I was exposed to folktales, since my father was a professor of Scandinavian folklore.

FM: Are there any tales you remember most vividly?

VON SYDOW: Mostly those which deal with the devil. I was never afraid of him. Where ever the Devil appeared in Scandinavian folklore, he always turned out to be funny. Or kind of ridiculous. Never really scary. So I always looked upon him as kind of a clown who was always outwitted by somebody. By the youngest brother of the three, or the good bismillah who talked him into showing off, like going into the empty rubbish bin when he's there, he plugs the rubbish and puts him on the oval and gives him whatever. But in all those tales, the devil was the loser, never anything.

FM: Did the public's reaction of after fear to *THE EXORCIST* surprise you, then?

VON SYDOW: Yes, I was very surprised.

FM: What are your feelings about the film, personally?

VON SYDOW: I'd read the book, and was very taken by it. But somehow I didn't react to the book as I later on reacted to the film when I saw it. I didn't think of this even while we were



doing the picture—but it was very negative. Very well-meant, but destructive in the way the little girl is humiliated by the demon. Forget about the fact that at the very end she comes out alive. The fact that she is there all through the story, suffering at the hands of evil, is unsettling to me when I think about it.

FM: Getting back to *FLASH GORDON*, was it easy for you to be as easy as Ming is on the screen?

VON SYDOW: No. As a boy, I was told, "You are not supposed to fight somebody who is smaller than you, or weaker than you, and two shouldn't try to best up one." Which is totally out of kilter with what Ming is, and what he does.

FM: How do you think *FLASH GORDON* will do around the world? After all, he's being billed as *THE GREATEST AMERICAN HERO OF ALL TIME*.

VON SYDOW: I think it will appeal to all civilizations because it's an entertaining picture, a picture for children of all ages. I'm sure it will have a wide audience, particularly in Japan, where they enjoy the sort of film. Also, there are many Italians and English actors in the film, which should help us in those countries.

FM: Did you wear a bald cap in the film?

VON SYDOW: No, they shaved my head.

FM: And the beard?

VON SYDOW: That was false. So was the moustache and eyebrows.

FM: Was it difficult playing to special effects that you had to imagine, and which would not be added until months later?

VON SYDOW: Not really. Actually, I'm not involved with that many optical effects, directly. At the very end a little. Most of my scenes are in the palace or inside other buildings, so I didn't really play very much to a blue screen [Editors Note: a backdrop which does not photograph, meaning the filmmakers can insert any background they wish when they have their films in the laboratory]. I have done that in other films, and it's difficult. Difficult, complicated, and distracting.

FM: Ming's full title is actually what?

VON SYDOW: Emperor Ming the Merciless of Mongo.

FM: That's a rather ominous name.

VON SYDOW: He's an ominous man.

FM: Do you think you played the character to its fullest extent? Is he as evil as he could have been?

VON SYDOW: No, I don't think so. I softened it, made him a bit absurd so that he wouldn't frighten anyone.

FM: Did you use any models in your performance? Any historical dictators, or that sort of thing?

VON SYDOW: Ming is not really the sort of character you'd read up on. I looked upon him as a mixture of Napoleon and Napoleon.

FM: Would you play Ming again if there is a *FLASH GORDON* sequel?

VON SYDOW: That depends. If the story is good, if the script is good—it all depends. I enjoyed playing him very much, so I've said, though I'm not sure it's the kind of role I'd like to play with. I enjoy parts that are more outdoors and human.

FM: Do you worry about the fact that kids who see this film may try to do some of the things that Flash or Ming do? The fights, with fists or swords?

VON SYDOW: I don't know. I suppose it's like seeing a fight between Holmes and Ali. If we didn't have that outlet, that healthy outlet on the screen, we might go out and fight somebody ourselves.

FM: Though the question of a sequel to *FLASH GORDON* is obviously something that the success of the first film will have to decide, you did appear in a sequel to one of your most successful films, *THE EXORCIST*. That was *THE HERETIC*. How do you feel about that film?

VON SYDOW: *THE HERETIC* was a sequel that, evidently, shouldn't have been made, and one which I entered very reluctantly. I hadn't planned to make it, my part was added to the story. Unfortunately, it wasn't a very good story and the picture was a flop.

FM: Any closing thoughts?

VON SYDOW: Only that I am pleased with the courage and imagination I took for a filmmaker to see me in the part of Ming. While it's true that villains are frequently played by foreigners, Dino De Laurentiis had great courage to offer me this spectacular villain, which was a great challenge to me.

END

SPACE: 1999

MARTIN LANDAU: COMMANDING ODYSSEY

On the 40th anniversary of the classic Sci-Fi show's debut, Oscar winner Martin Landau exclusively details backroom battles and creative brilliance behind the scenes of Gerry Anderson's celebrated series.

By David Weiner

The concept was killer and timely. A high-tech TV series set a quarter century into the future when mankind has colonized the moon. Earth's disposed radioactive waste on the far side of the moon has become a volatile, and a lightning trigger explodes the stockpile, sending our satellite hurtling into the abyss. Careening through space, the inhabitants of Moonbase Alpha must find a new, habitable planet to settle on before it's too late.

Created by Gerry and Sylvia Anderson of *THUNDERBIRDS* and "Sopranomaniacal" fringe, *SPACE: 1999* ran for only two 24-episode seasons starting in the fall of 1975, both very different in tone, and contains a fun factoring and key player in Sci-Fi TV lore: Martin Landau headlined as the intrepid Commander Koenig of Moonbase Alpha. His real-life wife Barbara Bain co-starred as the settlement's Chief Medical Officer Helena Russell. Barry Morse rounded out the top trio as Professor Victor Bergman, scientific advisor and ethical conscience to Koenig.

While Landau first made his mark on the Sci-Fi world with *SPACE: 1999*, his career could have taken a decidedly different path had he accepted Gene Roddenberry's earlier offer to join the cast of that "wagon train to the stars,"

STAR TREK. "I was offered Spock first," recalls Landau, who was good friends with "Lenny" Nimoy, and worked in adjacent soundstages at the Desilu lot, now known as Paramount Pictures. "We were good friends, and he replaced me on *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE*... I just didn't want to do *STAR TREK*. I didn't want to play an emotionless character. It would've killed me... He passes, then offers me a smile, 'I love the car!'"

Gerry Anderson was coming off the solid first season of his in-coaction show *UFO* and looking to do a variation on the second season to draw more viewers when he was told by TV mogul Lew Grade that ratings had slumped and the show was cancelled. A significant amount of production costs had been invested in *UFO*'s second season, so Anderson suggested "switching things around and making something different" with a new title, premise and cast. "And that's how *SPACE: 1999* was born." While it was a British television show, an American star was requested to secure the deal for U.S. broadcast. Landau and Bain were hot properties due to the runaway success of *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE*, and Anderson approached the couple to pitch the project. "I love the idea," says Landau. "Three hundred people hurtling through space in the future, unable to control their trajectory,

unable to have any more children because our hydroponic unit could just support [our current population], looking for a habitable planet... I always felt with science fiction you could say things that you couldn't say in contemporary context."

Inspired by the opportunity to draw parallels of world crisis and pollution/ecological issues, Landau was hooked. "And then I insisted that Barbara be added to the cast," he recalls. "I said, 'You've got to have a leading lady... and we're moving to England with our kids. I would like the family to be together, and I would like to work with Barbara again.' It was not common for husbands and wives to do a television series. And they said, 'OK, there's going to be a medical officer and the can be it.' And that's how it happened."

ENVIALE PRODUCTION DESIGN

SPACE: 1999 was notable for Keith Wilson's thoughtful Alpha production design paired with 2001. A *SPACE: 1999* alum Bruce Johnson's acceptably detailed miniature work (personal note: as a seven-year-old watching the show, I was convinced that they filmed it all on the moon!) There was more than a hint of influence from 2001 in all corners



starring
**Martin
Landau**



LEFT: Martin Landau and Barbara Bain; Alpha co-stars and real-life husband and wife. LEFT BELOW: Landau and Bain amid the *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE* ensemble. ABOVE: Season 1 and Season 2 show intros showing the "intellectual" vs. "more action" progression.

of the show's look and feel, from the orange spacemen to the "everyday week on television" look of the Mann Mission "bridge" of Moonbase Alpha. But the show's design still triumphed as wholly original, especially where the hardware was concerned: The Eagle transports, the modular fix-out of Moonbase Alpha, the angular Star Gun, and the Comlocks (communicator-looking devices) all were costable assets to *SPACE: 1999*. "The Eagle looked like the right progression in terms of years; they looked liked [they belonged in] 1999," opines Landau. "They didn't look like something from *BUCK ROGERS* in the '40s or *FLASH GORDON*." The uniforms were also very original. While they may look a bit too much like pajamas in retrospect, there was a logic to the color allocation: "Ruth Gemmich developed those costumes," recalls Landau. "Barbara knew, 'Ready, he had made a name for himself with topless bathing suits.' The great thing was that the sleeve was colored. I had the only charcoal gray, the astronauts had yellow, the people who worked at Mann Mission had red. You could tell someone's rank from a great distance. I always felt with the army, you had to get up close to see what rank somebody is. But [Gemmich's design] was very innovative because at first glance you knew exactly where someone belonged." The show was also a magnet for top-notch British guest stars — several who would go on to pivotal roles in *STAR WARS* and *FLASH GORDON* — and saw a parade of recognizable faces including Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, John Collins, Ian McShane, Sarah Douglas, David Prowse, Adrian Glover, and Brian Blessed.



ACROSS THE POND, INTO FICTION

In 1973, Landau, Bain and their family relocated to England and settled into the daily grind of creating a television show. With the show's huge three-million-pound budget breaking records as the most expensive to date for a broadcast series, the stakes were high, and the pressure-cooker environment was not helped by above-the-line friction as Landau went the extra mile to sculpt scripts after long shoot days so as to rework story beats to be more logical. "Sylvia Anderson never bled us," says Landau frankly. "She had Robert Culp and other people in mind — [she thought] if you're going to use someone in America, he's got to be more of a leading man and less a character actor. I knew that if I spoke too loudly, I'd be a nasty American, a colonel. The troublemaker Americans — the trouble was there if we wanted to accept it and take it. So I tried my damndest to be as control as I could be, and yet I was trying to protect the series."

None of the cast members knew that I was complaining.

quietly behind the scenes. The writers appreciated what I was doing, because they knew how hard we worked. We didn't have to do this, but we did it because we wanted the show to be as good as it could be."

Pondering those behind-the-scenes battles, Landau simply offers, "Stuff I liked. I liked a lot. And stuff I didn't, I didn't." The retrospective actor has a particular fondness for "The Black Sun" episode, in which Commander Keating and Professor Bergman find themselves braving almost certain death as the moon tanks through a black hole — where they come face-to-face with a female God. "I loved those ideas. I felt they were progressive ideas, interesting ideas," smiles Landau. "Barry and I opening a whole bottle of brandy, hundreds of years old, and toasting to no future, and getting through that black hole — and hearing God's voice, which is a female voice. All of it was like, wow! — it was a chance to play."

Landau sports that despite the at-times breakneck pace, camaraderie on set was upbeat. "Nick Tate and I became good pals. Prentis Harnick, and Barry, I loved them. Working with wife Barbara on yet another TV series was also a positive experience. "We enjoyed working together. She was a hard-working actress and very smart." He adds of the perils of novelty of having a married Hollywood couple star together in a major TV show: "I never thought of it as a package deal."

But the fact that they were able to negotiate that — in a business that doesn't necessarily care about a family being together — was kind of stupendous at the time. "We did work together more than most people got a chance to — one of the reasons being we wanted to — and

**"WITH SCIENCE FICTION
YOU COULD SAY THINGS
THAT YOU COULDN'T SAY IN
CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT."**



FAR LEFT: Catherine Schell & Tony Anhalt as Mayo & Tony. **LEFT:** Brian Johnson's (2001) *A SPACE ODYSSEY* stellar miniature work elevated *SPACE*: 1999's credibility factor. **ABOVE:** The cast poses for a snapshot in Keith Wilson's Main Mission set.

we wanted to keep the family together." Landau and Barn's marriage lasted more than 35 years until they divorced in 1993. "The best laid plans of mice and men, as they say," he reflects. "I tend not to talk too much about our break-up, but we had some great years together. Fruitful years together. Successful years together. And enjoyable years together. It was a male relationship, but time changes things."

Taking its cue from *STAR TREK* and *UFO*, the producers of *SPACE*: 1999 made a concerted effort to merchandise the show to kids. Dinky Toys created die-cast Eagles, while Mattel delivered a Moonbase Alpha "playset" for its trio of action figures (Koenig, Russell, and Bergman), plus a massive Eagle One spaceship that measured two and a half feet long. Episodes were revoiced, Charlton Comics expanded the ad ventures, and water gun neck toys sported the show's unique tale logo. "I have an action figure, and now my granddaughter who's six years old plays with it. It sort of looks like me," says Landau with a grin, play-acting the rigid arm motion that only a five-point articulated figure can provide. "I had two of them, now I have one left. I don't know what happened to it. Someone sniped it!" There were even LP records, coloring books, lunch boxes, and much more Landau boasts. "Tim Burton asked me to sign his *SPACE*: 1999 lunch box."

RADICAL SECOND-SEASON CHANGES

Despite the excitement, hype, and promotion surrounding the show, the first season of *SPACE*: 1999 was met with a mixed response from critics. Many praised the intellectual, philosophical, and metaphysical nature of the individual episodes, not to mention the stellar special effects, but others criticized the show for being too plodding, the acting too wooden, and select details scientifically inaccurate. "A lot of it was misunderstood because critics are critics," says Landau.

"You're sticking your neck out. People either get it or they don't, and if they don't, they won't." Often comparing his show to the enviable success of *STAR TREK* (which was a sci-fi infused success, subsequent to the show's cancellation after a three-year run), he adds: "Trekkers, Trekkers — call them what you will — never accepted *SPACE*: 1999 in the way that I wanted them to."

In an effort to quicken the pace and bring more action to the proceedings, *STAR TREK* and *THE WILD WILD WEST* producer Freddie Fuchsberger was hired to whip the show into shape. That meant a new theme song (Glenn Gray's great percussive, electric guitar-driven score made way for the heavy synthesizer/ horn balance of Derek Wilson's second-season theme — both very catchy in different ways), new characters,

more color to the wardrobe — and dropping Barry Morse. Catherine Schell's metamorphosis was added as a main character, allowing for more kiddie-oriented aliens, animals and "monster of the week" opportunities — much to the chagrin of Landau. "The thing that was important in the first season was we were searching for a place to live — a passing planet that was comparable to our needs — and that was lost in the second season. It was a circumstance of fate that knocked us out of orbit. And here we are, perennials hurtling through space at a ridiculous amount of speed, passing planets — can we breathe here, can we live here, can we eat here, is there other animal life?" I was very aware of what Koenig had to do as the first season. The second season, a lot of that was forfeited because Freddy had ridiculous storylines with Catherine running into God-knows-what... hoopers and sometimes ridiculous things that were not made well a bunch of rubber monsters."

He continues, "There were things that Koenig was asked to do that I thought was pre-captive. [Freddie] said, 'No one I'll pay attention. And I said, 'Are you kidding?' The great thing about this is we don't attack people. We get attacked and then we retaliate if we can.' " He said "Who'll know?" I said, "The same people who watched it the week before will know." We hoped to get a lot of following, and they have to understand this character

that has to be consistent, and you're customizing him to [this particular story. As a result, you're selling the character down the river. I can't possibly justify this as the guy I was last week. It's a different guy." He said, "You're making it very difficult." I said, "No I'm not. We're doing a series. It's not like this is an anthology show. If this was an anthology, I'd be happy to change every week, but it's not."

People are inviting us into their living room because we're friends of theirs, and you can't just arbitrarily change this guy every week because you're selling a story." Landau adds: "And yet, [Freddie and I] got along well. It was more of a constant battle than it should have been." He then clarifies: "It wasn't a battle. It was a conversation."

THE PLOT IS THICK

Despite the ups and downs, a third season was intended for *SPACE: 1999*, but it came down to budget allocation, and TFC Entertainment producer Lew Grade needed the money to market his feature films. "His advertising budget of the pictures that he made was virtually the budget for a third season, and we didn't have that third season because he went into American success movie mode. You know, sh't happens." Asked what he envisioned that third season to be like, Landau responds: "I think a third season would have been different again. I think the Andersons, or Gerry and Lew, would have made more money out of the third season with a better syndication package. I'd have gone back to the first season—it was a much more philosophical show, with more patience."

Reflecting on the experience of making *SPACE: 1999* as a whole, Landau smiles, "I loved doing it. I had fun doing it. Strains

pretty girls, and guest stars. All of it. It was never about our ages. It was about making a decent show for the world... I think life is an adventure. I've often been misunderstood, but that's OK. Doing what I do, you are subject to criticism. I know a lot of people aren't going to like what I do. That's OK."

After moving on from *SPACE: 1999* in



the late '70s, Landau's career trajectory faltered from a critical standpoint, but he kept busy on the big screen. The next time we saw him on television, it was once again opposite Harrison Ford for none other than *THE HARBLEIGH GLOBETROTTERS* ON *GILLIGAN'S ISLAND* in 1981. Rebounding a few years later with his spirited turn in Francis Ford Coppola's *TUCKER: THE MAN AND HIS DREAM*, the former Hitchcock *NORTH BY NORTHWEST* badke found his footing and became an Oscar favorite.



ABOVE: Catherine Schell's second-season shape-shifting Moya made the show more kiddie-friendly.

robbing a Best Supporting Actor and for that performance. He was nominated again for his amazingly nuanced embodiment of Judah Rosenthal in Woods' *ALL CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS*—and then he finally won the Best Supporting Actor statuette in 1995 for his incredible portrayal of troubled *DRACULA* legend Bela Lugosi as ED WOOD. ☞

Look for Landau's tales of playing Bela Lugosi—and hanging out with Boris Karloff!—as an upcoming issue of *Famous Monsters*!

MODERATE ALPHA MERCHANDISING

Taking their cue from the successful early '70s merchandising of similar sci-fi franchise *STAR TREK*, and even *PLANET OF THE APES*, the producers of *SPACE: 1999* unloaded their license on a variety of toys and trinkets: Models, comics, board games, Colorforms, records, rock toys, and Viewmaster reels were just the tip of the iceberg. Eagle toys by Dinky and Match who made a flying Verisimil version and built a giant, two-and-a-half-foot slaps were very popular, but the limited articulation dolls and accompanying "Moon Base Alpha (Control Room & Launch Monitor)" with Starlosh (TM) Computer" played left a lot to be desired.



COME PLAY WITH US! MEET THE SHINING TWINNS

BY DAVID KLEINER

"Come and play with us Danny. Forever, and ever, and ever, and ever."

No empty hotel hallway can ever be the same after watching *THE SHINING*, especially when you turn a corner and half expect to see the ghosts. Grady sisters standing side-by-side, staring you to join them. Lisa and Louise Burns were 10 when they started filming Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of the Stephen King novel and finished after they celebrated their 11th birthday on the set. More than three decades after the film's release, the identical twin Brits go about their London lives maintaining their spooky way, unless they're making the occasional cameo appearance. Lisa is a banker, and Louise is a genetic engineer. Now in their late forties, the 'SHINING' Grady Twins are enjoying their *SHINING* celebrity, with multiple 35th-anniversary events.

From the comfort of their hotel room just down the hall from room 217, the charming duo (who speak quickly and often finish each other's sentences) give *FM* new insight into what clinched their *SHINING* audition, what it was like to work with Kubrick, how it felt to be covered in blood, and what they really think of the wild *SHINING* conspiracy theories. **FILM ROOM 217**

Famous Monsters: What are your memories of your *SHINING* audition?
Lisa Burns: We'd worked in TV, but we'd never done anything in films.
Louise Burns: We'd just gone to

London for the day sightseeing. We had an agent and she said there's an audition at Elstree Film Studios, and dad said, "You know, if we go along, then we can look around the film studios." Sudden didn't do tests too much like they do now. And he said, "Don't worry, if you don't get the part, at least you get to see maybe how they make a movie." **LISA:** We'd been walking around London, we'd been shopping, so we looked a bit shop-soiled. (laughs) **LOUISE:** We washed our faces, brushed our hair. We must've seemed like the least horrific children in the entire room. **LISA:** We met [Kubrick] at the audition. I remember we both said, "Hello Mr. Kubrick," at the same time and he really thought that was freaky. (laughs)

FM: Did you know you were making a horror movie? What did they tell you as 10-year-olds?

LOUISE: I don't think they told us it was a horror movie until the end. In fact, the filming of the girls being in blood was one of the last scenes filmed. That took about three days to film, to prepare us, to talk about what was going to happen, and to allow any anxieties. It was a very closed set. There were very few people on set that day, where usually at the time you might have 500 extras and there's 50 stage people hanging around.

FM: What was the explanation for this bloody scene? It's pretty horrifying, but for an 11-year-old was it fun?

LOUISE: It didn't seem that horrific. **LISA:** We might've been very brave children. **LOUISE:** It wasn't real blood. It was just Kensington Gore (fake theatrical blood) that the makeup man Tom Smith made up. In preparation for that, he would show us how men can make anything seem very, very real. We had a cat and he painted cat scratches on my face, and it looked like the cat had really done them. I was so proud of them that I went to lunch and showed every body. "Look at my cat scratches!" It was very funny. And he gave us some blood to take home. He said, "Put some on your fingers and show all your friends. Make them think you cut yourself." It was really very interesting. **LISA:** And the outside of [The Overlook Hotel], that didn't exist, the whole front looked so real. When you walked round it, it was [a facade] set against a hill so it doesn't fall over. You'd think, "Wow, these people could take anything and they can make what I know to be fake look so real that you're fooled." We were accustomed to the idea that these people were almost like magicians. They could make something that was fake seem real so when they said it wasn't real blood, you're like, "Yeah, that's fine." We knew it would look real.

BELOW: Lisa and Louise Burns smile on THE SHINING set. FAR RIGHT: Louise and Lisa Burns today. RIGHT: Dual Grody sister dresses on display at the traveling Kubrick exhibit.



LOUISE. My biggest worry was being cold. That it would be cold blood [laughs]. And I also remember keeping the set very quiet by not having lots of people.

LISA. Because [Kubrick] only had one take. And that [closed set] was probably for him, because he liked re-shooting. He liked to take lots of takes.

LOUISE. It was one take because there was only one set dressing. Once it was covered in blood, that was really it.

FM. Did he say "play dead"? How did he direct you?

LISA. [to Louise] He didn't say 'hold your breath, did he'?

LOUISE. He didn't say 'play dead.' I think we breathed quite shallowly. He wanted one to be the mirror of the other. He liked repeating themes. **LISA.** And things upside down. Don't know why. Maybe he's good at disorienting us in his head.

FM. How was Kubrick with kids? Very personable? Or more authoritative — speak when spoken to?

LISA. Oh god, no.

LOUISE. We used to hang out together. We went sightseeing a lot with his parents. You wouldn't think they were making a big expensive movie. It was like a collection of people got together and just thought, "You know, we might have a little bit of fun doing this." Our

worst bit was it takes a long, long time to do anything. For anything to happen. You spend a lot of time just waiting. You might be on call every single day, but you might not perform for a week.

LISA. But you turn up and sit around. **LOUISE.** Kids find themselves entertained, don't they?

LISA. But in those days there weren't any of the hand-held devices there are now.

LOUISE. We could either choose to be bored [or not]. Stan had his own children come, and his daughter was making a documentary. She let us look down the camera and show us how to do different things.

LISA. And she explained what the crew

members did. We weren't allowed to do 'plus,' as such, but were were allowed to touch things and move around the movie lot sets.

FM. Were Jack Nicholson and Shelley Duvall present while you were filming your scenes? What was your relationship with them like?

LOUISE. I remember sitting on Jack Nicholson's knee. The caretaker's apartment — that seemed to be the place where most people congregated at the end of the day.

LISA. It was not a real place and just a set, but it was all made so real that you'd just use it anyway.

(Continued)



A MASTERPIECE OF MODERN HORROR

THE SHINING

STORY BY STEVEN KUBRICK

JOHN WICKSON, JOHN WICKSON, JOHN WICKSON
JOHN WICKSON, JOHN WICKSON, JOHN WICKSON
JOHN WICKSON, JOHN WICKSON, JOHN WICKSON
JOHN WICKSON, JOHN WICKSON, JOHN WICKSON

LOUISE. They were very serious about what they did but they didn't stand on ceremony and speak to each other in hushed tones. You wouldn't know that Stanley Kubrick was a world-famous director. He just seemed like a very regular person.

FM. How old were you when you finally saw the film?

LISA. I saw it at university on TV.
LOUISE. It was on TV once right and I lived in a house with other people, and it came on and I said, "I mean that man is!"

LISA. No one believes you.

LOUISE. And I said, "No seriously, straight up, wait 'til the end."

LISA. They think I merely have the same name [as one of the girls in the film]. Who would go through the trouble of taking someone else's name?

FM. What is your perception of the film and its impact on pop culture?

LOUISE. I think its impact as a horror movie is an homage to him: good Stanley Kubrick was I think Stanley could direct anything he chose to. You get so embodied in [the film] that you feel like you're in the story, and I think that's what he did with all of his films. But I think *THE SHINING*'s one

of his most accessible films.

FM. Do people stop you on the street and ask you to do your famous line, "Come and play with us, Danny. Forever, and ever, and ever"?

LISA. No, fortunately nobody ever did!
LOUISE. That would be very strange.
LISA. (to Louise) Some people do ask, "Can you say the line? Can you say the line?"

LOUISE. At the conventions it's OK, but people don't come up to us in the street and say "Come play with us Danny." I think I'd pretend and say "My name is not Danny, and who are you anyway?" (laughs)

LISA. When people come up to you, my, to be approachable because it takes a lot to approach someone. So it would be rude to offend them.

LOUISE. And we don't want them to faint in front of us.

FM. Lastly, what did you think of the documentary *ROOM 237* and all of its wild theories about *THE SHINING*'s hidden meanings? Were you amused by it? Do you subscribe to any of it? Do you actively want to debunk anything in it?

LOUISE. It's all bollocks (laughs)

LISA. I find it very funny that the Americans who landed on the moon prefer to believe that Kubrick faked it than genuinely speaking. I find people who believe the fake much more quickly than they would ever believe [the truth], they prefer to be lied to. They really don't seem to read. It's just weird. But it's all over the world that people will believe what would seem incredible, where the real truth isn't that incredible and it also isn't considered to be believable either.
LOUISE. We do have a good conspiracy theory. ☹

Interact with Lisa & Louise Burns on Twitter @ShiningTwins



"We goof around in hotels and corridors recreating the hall scene."



ABOVE: The sisters at *THE SHINING* 35th anniversary reunion at Elstree Studios. **MIDDLE:** The twins celebrated their 11th birthday on the *SHINING* set.

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ULTRAMAN GA

Japan's greatest hero has been reborn in the pages of a new manga, created by the dynamic duo of Eiichi Shimizu and Tomohiro Shimoguchi.

BY ED BLAIR



With no signs of Hollywood reaching "peak reboot" yet, it can be a bit daunting to see yet another familiar, beloved tale brought back to life. But in the case of Eiichi Shimizu and Tomohiro Shimoguchi's new ULTRAMAN manga series, their fresh take on the classic tale is a continuation of the original story that finds its own voice, mixing new and old to create one of the best new manga series in recent memory. It's no small task continuing the story of one of Japan's greatest heroes, but the creative duo took some time out of their busy schedules for FM to discuss how they stayed true to the original series while forging their own path.

Fanatic Monsters: I understand, according to when you spoke with Sci-Fi Japan, that when you were first approached about the ULTRAMAN project you turned it down. Why was that?

Eiichi Shimizu & Tomohiro Shimoguchi: For life-size heroes such as Batman, Iron Man, and in Japan Kamen Rider, the story is fairly approachable in a manga context (Ironman and Iron Man are based on comics too). Ultraman, on the other hand, is a giant hero who exists in the world of live-action shows known as Tokusatsu. We simply couldn't think we could convert the dynamism of Tokusatsu's giant hero into manga. Of course, manga has a particular dynamism, but we personally still think the dynamism of manga and Tokusatsu are incompatible. So when we were first offered this opportunity we declined, but when it was suggested we could have a life-size Ultraman who wears an Ultraman suit to fight, we thought this concept could be made into a manga and accepted the proposal.

FM: How was it decided that the story would follow the suit and not be a continuation of the Shin Hayata story?

ES&TS: At first we envisioned a completely different story. The main character was a rural policeman and one day he receives a report of an unidentified object projecting light. Then he first meets the alien/Ultraman character

Then we received a request to make a story continuing the original ULTRAMAN series. We struggled to come up with an idea but in the end we landed on the most logical idea, that to continue the original ULTRAMAN series the story has to be based on Hayata's son. If the story is based on Hayata's son, the story can include father and son episodes, as well as generational inheritance episodes. Basically a new angle on the ULTRAMAN story.

FM: From an artistic standpoint, since ULTRAMAN is a very classic and beloved story, were there any limitations you felt while creating the new look of the suits and aliens so that they are their own, but not too far removed from the much-celebrated Tsuburaya designs?

ES&TS: We didn't feel any limitations. Actually, it was easy to design characters because the original designs are perfectly designed. In fact, the only thing that concerned us as people using our design looked like Iron Man. The fact is if you have a life-size hero in a modern mechanical suit, it's very likely design-wise to be told it looks like Iron Man. We tried our best to design something that didn't resemble Iron Man, but still there are people who mention a resemblance, so we are surprised as well as humbled by the comments (laughs). Although, we do love Iron Man!



FM: The inclusion of Bemular was a nice touch for classic fans as it was the original enemy of the first Ultraman. Can we expect more familiar faces from the original series, or will the aliens be more original creations?

ES&TS: Speculation is welcome! Of course, you will see original new characters, but please look forward to familiar characters (both aliens and monsters) appearing in the story.

FM: While Shinjiro has an outfit similar to his father's and used the Spacium Ray, we haven't seen any size transformations. Is that something we can anticipate, or are you going to take the character and his powers in a different direction?

ES&TS: A difficult question. This relates to the fundamental part of the story, so we can't talk about it in detail yet. Please look out for this in an upcoming volume! As the story progresses, we learn that Shinjiro's power is not different from his father's, but rather it has transcended his father's power.

FM: The tone of this story is somewhat more mature than the original TV show. How did you decide on the feel of this story?

ES&TS: We didn't consider the story for a particular age range. Rather, we tried to come up with a story and atmosphere where readers who didn't know the ULTRAMAN story could enjoy. There are many people in Japan who know ULTRAMAN but haven't seen the actual TV show. We hope our ULTRAMAN manga will be a gateway for people to become interested in the original ULTRAMAN TV series.

FM: Too often we hear about manga and comic teams that never even speak with one another during the creation process. How does your creative relationship work?

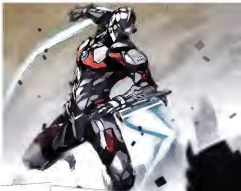
ES&TS: When we get scripts, we are really serious. Sometimes we argue over differences in opinion, but usually we get along. We are consistently creating and having fun.

We often get good ideas when we are talking about nothing. When we sit down and consciously try to talk about the manga, the conversation often becomes stilled and hard to do.

FM: Now that we've established Shinjiro as the heir apparent to Ultraman, what do you have in store for the character? And will Shin Hayata be playing a larger role as the series continues?

ES&TS: Moving forward, Shinjiro will grow even more, and his Ultraman suit will be renewed. Please read the actual chapter and find out yourself! Of course, his father, Shin Hayata will continue to have a major role in the future story! We've already decided the end of the story and we are anxious to draw the climax. We believe you will be surprised and pleased! 

*The new ULTRAMAN series is available at your local bookstore or at your favorite online book retailer.
www.wanga-presents.com*



EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!

LOST IN SPACE®

THE COMIC

As announced on FM's San Diego Comic-Con panel this year, American Gothic Press is thrilled to bring the unfilmed LOST IN SPACE Season 4 scripts to comic books! LOST IN SPACE is Irwin Allen's beloved Sci-Fi television classic that was prematurely canceled at its third season. Now the continuing adventures of the Robinson family will see light for the first time. The scripts were written by Corey Wilber (STAR TREK) and have been adapted for comics by AGP Editor Holly Interlandi with interior art by Kostas Pontoulas. Seen here are several cover images that will ship with the first issue, rendered by Steve Stanley, RC Aradio, and Patrick McEvoy.

Coming February 2016!



ART BY STEVE STANLEY



EXCLUSIVE PHOTO COVER



ART BY RC ARADIO



ART BY PATRICK MCEVOY

LOST IN SPACE: GARY K. BROWN/STUDIO CITY; THE MONSTER: LARRY FORD/STUDIO CITY; THE MONSTER: LARRY FORD/STUDIO CITY; THE MONSTER: LARRY FORD/STUDIO CITY

FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND • JAN/FEB 2016

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BROKEN MOON PREVIEW: THE EPIC CONCLUSION



ART BY NAT JONES

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ISSUE 4 OF BROKEN MOON GOES ON SALE
JANUARY 13, 2016!



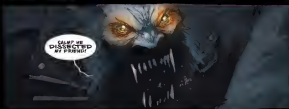
ART BY SANJULIAN



LET ME
AT HIM.

I'LL KILL
HIM!

EVERYBODY
CALM
DOWN!



CALM UP
WE
DISSECTED
MY FRIEND!



I DON'T SEE
THE PROBLEM IT
WAS A SIMPLE
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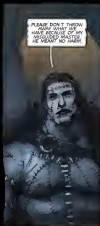
AND ALL YOU
CAN SEE.



YOUR
FRIEND IS
ALIVE AND
WELL.

ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT?

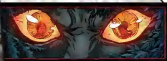
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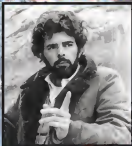
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FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Everything we all know and love about STAR WARS we owe to one man. With the arrival of THE FORCE AWAKENS and a whole new wave of STAR WARS films from new and exciting filmmakers, it can be easy to forget that — love or hate those “special editions” and whatever came later — we are ultimately indebted to the incredible imagination and tenacity of the original filmmaker: George Lucas. Feery knew that, and for that reason we share his heartfelt tribute from back in the day.



GEORGE LUCAS OUR HERO

The term “our hero” is not applied lightly. George Lucas has given us 6 or 8 years of his life... to produce a picture that will be talked about during our lifetime and beyond.

Someone asked me, within the first week after STAR WARS burst on an astonished world, what I thought of it. “You’re the expert,” they said. I replied, “Well, it made me just one more kid again in the audience. My Sense of Wonder has never died in the 50 years I’ve been a science fiction fan but STAR WARS sure fanned the old flames of enthusiasm.”

When it is reported in the press that the President of the United States posted because his daughter Amy had a birthday party and invited her friends to see STAR WARS and he didn’t get an invitation, you know you’ve done something right.

George Lucas: in my judgment you deserve a hundred Academy Award Oscars. Let Chewy or Threeplo carry ‘em all for you.

The Force bless & preserve you!

FORREST
ACERDUS

If you enjoyed reading this issue of Famous Monsters magazine, spread the word. Tell your friends to pick up a copy. Work the pop-culture conversation around you to include Sci-Fi, fantasy, and horror. Do it so we can cultivate, educate, and ensure generations of Monster Kids to come.



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